

AD: After Digimon Resurrection

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Summary: The stories in the AD series are what if tales that revolve around events that happen after the Digidestined return home in season 1 and before season 2. In this one, an old foe returns from the dead.

1. A.D.: After Digimon -- Resurrection,
Pa...

****Resurrection****

****Part 1****

Intense white light stabbed into his eyes. He screamed, shutting them tightly and jumped back, only to find that there was no solid ground below him. He fell a few feet and landed heavily on his head.

Still dizzy, he stood up.

"What the . . .?" he said to himself. "Where am I?"

He opened his eyes dimly and waited for them to get used to the light again. His head hurt and it wasn't making it any easier for him to collect his thoughts. He looked above him and saw a large, iron bell and a small window in the gray brick wall. He must have fallen in from that.

He stood up and tried to keep his balance when he noticed that he still wasn't very high off the ground. That meant he was only a foot tall! He looked down at his feet and saw a pair of bird-like claws with red talons.

"Forget the _where am I _question," he said, "more importantly, _who_ am I?"

He looked over at his arm and noticed that it was a black, leathery wing. It was like a bat's wing.

Bat? he thought. The word sucked at his mind, bringing up weird images. Images of a dark man dressed in a cape, with a red mask and fangs. Images of bats and crimson lightning - whatever that was - and . . . and teeth. Great big teeth drawn up into a cruel grin.

"Myotismon," he whispered, remembering. Oh yeah, things were starting to come back to him now. His name for one.

He flew up to the window and perched in it and looked outside.

From his guess, he was in an abandoned church steeple. "I'm a bat in a belfry," he chuckled. Around him were run down buildings and cracked sidewalks. It was an ugly neighborhood. Even so, he wondered why it was still here. Myotismon would have destroyed it along with the rest of the city.

"Hey, where is the boss, anyway," asked Demidevimon, his harsh voice receiving no answer. The last thing he remembered, the Boss was going to make a meal out all the people at the convention center, poised to take over the planet and then . . . and then . . .

"HEY!" yelled Demidevimon in a rage. "That bat-loving freak ate me!" He was steamed. He was too mad to speak. Yet somehow he was alive. That was the part he couldn't figure out.

"Oh well, who cares?" he said, calming down. "Those Digidestined brats must've taken him down. Good riddance! I'm off the leash and I can do anything I want!"

He sat in the window and stared out at the world around him. "If only I could think of what I wanted to do . . ."

Suddenly, he heard a phone ring. He looked around and saw a pay phone ringing by itself. He looked around, but no one was there to answer it. He didn't want to leave the steeple until after dark, so he decided not risk answering it in broad daylight.

The phone rang for ten minutes. He kept waiting for someone to pick it up. The ringing was driving him nuts! Whoever was on the other end of that phone had to be a complete psycho to let it ring a few hundred times!

Finally, his annoyance out-weighting his caution, he flew down to the pay phone, made sure no one was in sight, and picked it up.

"Boy, have you ever got the wrong number," growled Demidevimon into the receiver. He wasn't too happy with balancing on one foot and holding the phone in the other and he really felt like telling this guy off.

"Actually, I got exactly the one I wanted," said a hushed, oily voice. "Nice of you to finally pick up, Demidevimon."

He froze. Someone else knew he was alive and also knew where he was.

"Okay, start talking, chump!" Demidevimon squeaked trying to sound tough (and failing).

"Watch your mouth, you little feathered bowling ball," the voice said without even getting louder, but somehow getting much nastier. "I've got an assignment for you."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yes. It has been nearly one and a half years since the Digidestined defeated the last of the those digimon that were prepared to take over the digital world. The Digital World has turned against those who would seize power. Things are currently not in our favor, to say the least." The voice paused for a moment, as if in reflection, then continued. "But that's why I've arranged your resurrection."

"Huh?" said Demidevimon.

"In another year and a half, we will have gathered our forces up again and we will be ready to make another attempt at conquest. We will be returning to Earth. In the meantime, we need to take a few precautions. We want the Digidestined children out of the way. We don't have a lot of energy to resurrect many digimon, but we decided that you were clever enough to orchestrate the children's destruction. And, since you're only at the Rookie level, you didn't expend too much energy."

"Hold it," said Demidevimon. "And let me know if I've got this right: You want me to take out eight kids, all by myself, when Myotismon and all the other virus digimon in the Digiworld couldn't do it?"

"They are without their digimon partners now, for one thing. For another, you will get some assistance later. If you help us, you will be greatly rewarded for your efforts when we cross into Earth's dimension."

"And what if I tell you to choke on a Poyomon?" Demidevimon asked.

"We are coming regardless of your help or not. And when we arrive and find you, the one that didn't assist us when we most needed you . . . well, you don't want to be snack food again, do you?"

Demidevimon started to sweat. No, he didn't want to be snack food again.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Glad you decided to help out," the voice said. "My companions and I are leaving the details up to you, but here are a few things we require . . ."

And Demidevimon listened to the voice for another hour, balancing awkwardly on one foot as the sun went down and darkness settled onto the city.

* * *

><p>The next morning, Tai got up and made breakfast. It was good to be on vacation again. Now he had the chance to sleep in. His parents were both out and Kari was getting dressed, so he decided to make some scrambled eggs.<p>

"Good morning, Tai," Kari said, rubbing her eyes, still a bit tired.

"Hey, little sister," Tai said. "What do you have planned today?"

"Nothing, really," she said. "I thought I'd just sit back and watch a little TV. What about you?"

"Soccer. What else?" He grinned. He played just about every day now. Sora and Izzy would be there too.

"Are you sure you don't want to come along?" he asked.

"Thanks, but I'll be fine. When are you leaving?"

"Right after breakfast," he said, setting down a plate of eggs.

* * *

><p>As he left that morning for the field, soccer ball under his arm, he was in high spirits. And why shouldn't he be? He was young, talented, and a national hero. He and the other Digidestined had returned home to heroes' welcomes. They'd all been given medals of honor and on TV and the whole country, not to mention the world, had stood up and applauded them as brave warriors who had saved the planet.<p>

Eventually it had died down. The chaos, the clamor, the frantic way people fussed over the brave little kids from Japan that had stopped an onslaught of bloodthirsty monsters . . . they were all glad when it died down. Now they were right back where they started from: In school, with their parents, and still the best of friends.

He only wished Agumon was there with him.

He paused a minute on the street, his spirits momentarily darkened, but he let it pass and continued on toward the field.

It was a brisk autumn day, but still seasonable warm, and he didn't even need a jacket.

Suddenly, for some odd reason, he felt a chill. He looked up and saw a strange, black bird flying high overhead. Or was it a bird? A bat, perhaps? But why would a bat be flying during the day?

"Come on, move it kid!" someone said behind him. Tai realized that he had been standing at the crosswalk and the walk sign had flashed on.

"Uh, sorry," he said absently to the man. He wasn't sure what he saw, but he figured it couldn't have been important anyway, so he hurried on.

* * *

><p>Kari was in the bathroom, about to brush her teeth when she heard the crash of glass and the thump of something small and heavy on the floor.<p>

She ran into the living room and saw the hole in the sliding glass door and black, round lump on the floor. As she came closer, she recognized who the black thing was.

She gasped and took a few steps back, but stopped when she realized that Demidevimon wasn't moving. She was afraid to come near him, but she was also afraid to leave him there. He looked hurt and she hated to not help someone in need, even if they _were_ an evil digimon.

"What would the others do?" she asked herself. Tai would have told her to stay away from him, to be careful. Then again, when Mimi and Joe had found Ogremon in the Digiworld last year, they had helped him and he had proved a true ally.

In the end, she went to Demidevimon to help him, believing that he was too hurt to be a threat to anybody.

As she knelt down and touched his head, he twitched. She drew her hand back in momentary surprise, but then put her hand back and turned him over onto his back.

Demidevimon opened his eyes dimly and asked in a small voice, "Where am I?"

"You don't know?" asked Kari.

"No," he said. "Should I?"

He had a bump on his head and the leathery mask he wore constantly was torn by the glass. Kari began to think he really didn't remember. Still, she wanted to check.

"But you know who I am, don't you?" she asked cautiously.

"No," he said, squinting at her. Then his eyes bulged. "Wait a minute. I . . . I can't seem to remember _my_ name, either."

He stood up, looked around in a panic, then seemed to get dizzy and fell back to the floor.

"Do you know who I am?" he looked up at her with frightened eyes.

"Yes," she said. "But let's get you taken care of first. Then I can tell you some things."

* * *

><p>"Kari, I'm home!" Tai called as he walked in the door. He walked past the kitchen and into the living room where he froze.<p>

The sliding glass door that led out onto the balcony was smashed in and glass littered the living room floor.

"Kari!" shouted Tai, seized with fear.

"Quiet!" said Kari as she poked her head from their bedroom.

"What happened?" asked Tai, his voice still raised.

"Keep it down and I'll tell you," Kari said.

"Okay, okay," Tai said, dropping his voice and calming down. "Now, what happened?"

"I'll tell you, but you have to promise not to get too excited, okay?"

"Fine. I promise," Tai said impatiently, wanting her to get to the point.

"Okay," Kari said, taking a deep breath and beginning her story.

* * *

><p>There was relative quiet in the apartment building that day. Most people were either at work, or out enjoying the weather, or inside taking it easy. It was so quiet, in fact, that just about every tenant on Tai and Kari's floor heard him suddenly shout, "YOU'RE LETTING WHO SLEEP _WHERE?"_

* * *

><p>"You said you wouldn't get excited," said Kari, wincing.<p>

"When I said that," hissed Tai, not wanting the whole neighborhood to know what was going on, "I didn't think you would tell me that an evil digimon with a lost memory had crashed through our window and that you decided to take care of him and let him sleep in our apartment, not to mention our bedroom!"

"Don't be mad, Tai," Kari said. "After all, he was hurt and he didn't look dangerous to me."

"He's a lot more dangerous than you think, Kari. I've seen what he can do. Before you joined us, he almost split the group up. He's an evil digimon to the core."

"Like Wizardmon?" Kari asked. "Or Pumpkinmon? Or Gotsumon? Or maybe like Gatomon? Or any of those other so-called 'evil' digimon?"

Tai paused. All those were digimon that had worked for Myotismon and had turned out to be some of the most selfless, good-hearted digimon they'd ever known. Now she was challenging whether the same was true of Demidevimon.

"Look," Tai said, his voice softer now, "it's not that I don't think it's possible. But you don't know Demidevimon the way I do. He was dangerous because he was a good liar. I don't think it's safe to trust him."

"Something wrong?" Demidevimon said as he walked into the room. "Oh, you must be Tai, Kari's brother. It's nice to meet you."

"Like you don't remember who I am," Tai said bitterly, narrowing his eyes.

"Tai!" Kari said.

"Listen, I don't want to stay if I'm going to cause a fight," Demidevimon said, his eyes cast downward. "Kari's told me all about what I did, and even though I can't remember any of it, I really don't blame you. You've been nice enough already and I can take care of myself. I'll just fly over to the building across the street and sleep there tonight. I don't think it'll rain anyway." He started to walk back towards the sliding door and prepared to take off.

"Yeah, there's no rain in sight. See ya!" Tai said crossing his arms.

"Tai!" Kari said again, chastizing him. "Demidevimon, don't you worry about us. You just go back to our room and get some decent rest. I'll talk to my brother."

"Okay, if you say so," he said, walking back to the room. Kari shut the door and turned back to Tai.

"Tai, how can you be so mean?" she asked.

"He's playing you for a sap, Kari. He's too dangerous to be trusted."

"Tai, I know you're worried, but I can take care of myself and I don't think he's lying to us. Myotismon is dead and so are the other evil digimon who were trying to kill us. What do you we have to lose?"

Tai was quiet for a minute. "Okay," he said finally. "But one thing: Isn't he supposed to be dead, too?"

Kari thought for a moment. "Well, digimon never really die, after all."

Tai did not look convinced.

"Oh, by the way," she said. "Demidevimon doesn't think we should tell Mom and Dad about him. Can you keep this a secret?"

Tai's frown grew even more tight and his eyes even more angry. He didn't like it. He didn't like the fact that this short, lying freak was staying in his room and was taking advantage of his sister's natural kindness and he really hated the fact that he was making her lie about it. Even so, he believed in trust and, like it or not, he would trust Kari on this one.

* * *

><p>Demidevimon pretended to sleep that night. He was hidden in an old toy chest under a blanket. He was silent and he waited for Kari to fall asleep. He could tell by the slow, rhythmic breathing that she was asleep. Tai stayed awake. He could hear his short, heavily drawn breaths and he was fairly certain he was watching the toy chest like a hawk. Demidevimon could see in the dark, but he couldn't move or else he would raise Tai's suspicions. He had to rely on sound alone.<p>

At last, Tai gave in around midnight and fell into a regular breathing pattern. He was asleep.

"At last," Demidevimon thought to himself. His plan was going perfectly. Kari's trusting, generous nature made her the perfect target for a sympathy play. Now that it was night he could do what he had been commanded: Find one of their digivices.

As he climbed out the toy chest silently, he peered about the room, searching for one. He needed to find it quickly. According to his mysterious benefactor, he would be getting some assistance and some new instructions tomorrow.

He looked up at the two kids, sleeping the night away in their bunk beds, and grinned sadistically.

"Within a week," Demidevimon thought to himself, "those brats will be history. Tai, Kari, Sora, Joe, Matt, T.K., Mimi, and Izzy . . . all of those brats will wish they'd never seen a digimon when I'm though with 'em!"

****To be continued . . .****

2. A.D.: After Digimon -- Resurrection, Pa...

****A.D.: After Digimon****

****Resurrection, Part 2****

Matt sized up his opponent. He was clever, all right, but this was one battle that he couldn't win. He watched him. He studied his face solemnly as he gave his final answer:

"Mr. Green, in the Billiard room, with the knife," said T.K. to Matt with supreme confidence. He folded his arms smugly and grinned.

"Let's take a look," said Matt, having his own guess in mind as he opened the solution envelope.

"Sorry, pal," Matt said, holding up the cards, "it was Professor Plum."

"Aw, man!" T.K. said pouting a little. "Well, what do you want to do now?"

Matt was just about to say something when the phone rang.

"Hello?" Matt answered.

"Matt, is that you?" Tai's voice came over the phone loud and clear.

"Tai? Hey, man, I haven't seen you in a while, how's it going?"

"Bad," said Tai. "Listen, I'm calling all of us together for a meeting in the park. The usual spot."

"All of us?" Matt knew he meant the rest of the Digidestined, but it was unusual for Tai to call something official, like a

meeting.

"Yeah, everyone," said Tai. "T.K.'s there, too, right?"

"Of course," Matt smiled and looked to his little brother who was watching him curiously. Things had been so great since they'd returned from the Digiworld. A new arrangement had been worked out between their parents. In the past, Matt stayed with their father while T.K. remained with their mother. However, they had gotten so attached to each other that they all agreed that it would be better if they spent a lot more time together. Now, they could see each other almost whenever they liked.

"Well, tell him to come too," Tai said.

"Wait a minute, Tai! You make this sound like an emergency-"

"This IS an emergency, Matt. Trust me."

"Okay, okay, we'll be there," Matt said.

"Excellent. See ya there," Tai said, and hung up.

"Well, bro," Matt said, "looks like we've got a meeting to go to. Tai wants us to meet him and the others in the park."

"How come, Matt?" T.K. asked.

"I don't know, but Tai says it's important."

"Okay, then let's go!" T.K. said enthusiastically.

* * *

><p>Tai said nothing, but looked gravely at the others. Sora was already there and she sat cross-legged, watching Tai with concern. Whatever he called this meeting for, it was definitely serious.<p>

Izzy was also there, but was impatient to know why Tai had called him so suddenly and asked him to come. "Tai, why did you-?" he began to ask.

"I'll tell you when everyone's here, okay?" Tai said, cutting him off. "Just a minute or two, all right?"

Tai smiled. Izzy could also tell he was troubled, but that having his friends there was making him feel better. Shortly thereafter, Mimi, Matt, and T.K. arrived.

"Okay," said Tai, "that's everyone except-"

"Wait!" called Joe, running towards them. "Don't start without me!"

"-Joe," Tai finished, a satisfied look coming across his face.

Joe came and sat down heavily among them. "Sorry I'm a little late," Joe said, out of breath, "but I just got out of school for vacation today and I just got home to get your message ten minutes ago, so I

ran all the way here and," he gulped down a breath, "I'm here, so what's going on?"

Matt smiled. He forgot sometimes that Joe was the oldest one among them, that he was the only one in junior high now, that he went to a different school that got out on different days. In fact, he sometimes forgot that things were changing all the time, but he supposed things were changing all the time.

"Okay, now that everyone's here-" Tai began.

"Wait!" cried Mimi, "Where's your sister, Tai? Where's Kari?" They all looked to Tai. It was a good question.

"Kari's part of the problem. I need to ask you guys for some advice," Tai said.

Matt wasn't sure where this was going. It wasn't like Tai to call a meeting just for family advice. He was avoiding telling them something.

"Now, just stay calm while I tell you this. Are you calm?" he asked. They all nodded, Joe a little less than the others.

"Kari found a digimon," Tai said. Everyone froze.

"A new one?" Izzy asked.

"No, an old one. One we thought was dead."

"Chuumon?" Mimi asked quietly.

"I wish," Tai said. "But no." Tai was quiet for a moment. Everyone leaned forward, eager to hear what he would say, yet also dreading the possible secret he was hiding.

"Demidevimon," said Tai.

* * *

><p>The phone in Tai's apartment rang. The apartment was empty, save for Demidevimon, and he wasn't about to answer the phone. It made a lot more sense to let the answering machine get it. Besides, he was still trying to find the digivice.<p>

Finally, the answering machine picked up.

"Hi, you've reached the Kamiya residence," said Tai and Kari's father's voice on the machine. "We aren't in right now, so please leave a message."

Demidevimon continued searching, but listened to the answering machine. That's why he froze when he heard the voice of the caller.

"Demidevimon," said the oily voice, the mysterious entity who had resurrected him, "pick up the phone. Now."

Demidevimon walked into the room, unsure of answering the phone.

"Come on, I know you're there, so pick up or I'll have your feathers plucked out and used in a throw pillow made out of your tanned hide."

A very nervous Demidevimon fluttered up to the phone and hit it off the hook and talked into it on the kitchen counter. "Hey, sorry," he said. "I was just makin' sure it was you!" he laughed nervously.

"Yes, I'm sure," said the voice. "How is the search for the digivice going?"

"Er, you see--"

"You didn't find it yet."

Demidevimon was just glad he didn't have to make up a lie that the voice wouldn't have believed anyway. "No, not yet. But I'll get it! Don't worry about a thing! These kids trust me, now. They fell for the old amnesia bit hook, line, and sinker!"

"It won't hold out for long. Still, your progress is better than what we'd originally hoped for. My associates and I think that we can move on to the second phase of the plan: a few partners for you to work with."

"Partners?" Demidevimon asked. "You mean more resurrected digimon?"

"Yes," said the voice slyly. "Now listen carefully and do exactly as I say and I'll tell you who your new partners are and where you can rendezvous with them."

Demidevimon listened carefully and chuckled when he found out who he'd be working with. When they were done discussing the plan, he erased the partial message from the answering machine.

"So, I meet my new partners tonight, eh?" he said to himself. Well, they wouldn't have been his first choices, or even his second, but he figured that his benefactor couldn't be picky. In any case, he had to do some major brainstorming. He had a few lies to tell tonight.

* * *

><p>"So, what you're asking us," asked Izzy, who wanted to make sure that the whole group understood Tai's question, "is whether or not you should trust your sister's feelings and let an evil digimon sleep in your home."<p>

Tai nodded. "Well, what do you think?"

Everyone was quiet for a moment. "I say trust her, Tai," said Sora, breaking the silence. "She's got a good instinct for people. And digimon, for that matter."

Matt agreed. "She's your sister, Tai. You've got to let her be her own person, to make her own call. I don't think she would let you turn Demidevimon out without her consent anyway." Matt knew from experience that you had to trust your siblings. He hadn't always

trusted T.K to make the right decisions, but he'd learned how important it was to trust him, to let him become his own man through his own choices.

"I'm with Matt and Sora," said T.K.

"Me too," said Mimi. "Besides, whenever people on soap operas get amnesia, they're usually completely different, so maybe he won't be so . . . so . . ."

"Conniving, cold-blooded, deceptive?" Joe offered.

"Icky," said Mimi, settling on that.

"I for one think it's a bad idea, Tai," said Joe. "We have no idea if he really did lose his memory, and if he's just lying to you, then, well, just keep your guard up."

Izzy had out his computer and was typing. Then he turned the screen to Tai.

"Do you see what that is, Tai?" he asked.

"Yes," he said grimly, seeing Demidevimon's picture.

It was a folder of pictures taken during Myotismon's attacks. And right by his side, grinning with derision at the humans he had rounded up for whatever foul purposes they planned, was Demidevimon. Not just a soldier, he was Myotismon's right-hand man (or 'mon, so to speak). He hadn't shown a single redeeming trait in the entire time they had known him.

"The evidence doesn't lie," Izzy said. "The information gathered during Myotismon's reign of terror show that Demidevimon was right there. That's not just lackey kind of evil, that's real evil. Even if he has lost his memory, I don't believe he has it in him to be good."

"Are you sure, Izzy?" Tai asked.

"No. But this might be a sign of trouble. Just in case, do you have your digivice, Tai?"

"Yeah, at home," said Tai. "I figured if I ever needed it again, I didn't want it to get damaged when I went out to play soccer or something. I keep it somewhere safe."

"You might want to think about keeping it close," Izzy said as he shut his laptop. "I'm leaving with my parents until late tonight, so send an email if you need anything else. I'll be back to help tomorrow if anyone needs me. In the meantime, just try and keep on your toes."

Tai smiled. "Thanks you, guys. I'll keep in touch. Right now, I want to get back and keep an eye on that winged rat."

Everyone said their goodbyes and parted. This was serious. An evil digimon, an evil **dead **digimon was staying over at one of their houses. Even though most of them advised Tai to trust Kari, they all felt the bind he was in. All of them had been personally victimized

by Demidevimon. He almost broke up the Digidestined for good. If he hadn't changed, they all knew, even better than Tai or Kari, that he was far more dangerous than he looked.

* * *

><p>"I'm back!" called Kari as she walked in the door. "Tai? Mom? Dad? Anyone there?" she asked.<p>

"Just me," said Demidevimon in a friendly voice as he poked his head in from the bedroom.

"How are you feeling?" Kari asked.

"Much better, thank you," he said, bowing graciously. "But there's a favor I need to ask you."

"Oh, what's that?" Kari asked.

"I think my wings have healed up nice and I want to get them some exercise. Would it be all right with you if I went for a long flight?"

Kari looked puzzled. "A flight?"

"Yeah, I've been cooped up here all day and I'd like to stretch my wings. Could I go outside for a few hours and catch some air?" he asked, looking at her with hopeful eyes.

"Well . . ." she said, wavering.

"Come on! It's getting dark, so no one would see me. I could go out the sliding glass door in you and Tai's room and be back later on that night. Good deal?"

Kari looked at him. He seemed so eager. So sincere. She looked to the clock. It was near six o'clock. "Okay, but you have to be careful. Promise?"

"Cross my heart," said Demidevimon, grinning.

Kari grinned back and guided him to the sliding door. He flew out and promised that he'd return in an hour or two before he vanished into the night.

Kari shut the door and sat down on Tai's bed, the lower bunk. She was happy that Demidevimon was doing so well in her care, but she was getting tired of the lies. She hoped he would be well enough to live on his own soon. She didn't like lying about keeping a digimon to her parents. She didn't like lying about the hole in the door that Demidevimon had crashed through. She didn't like the way her parents looked at her when she said a high-flying baseball hit the window. If Tai hadn't backed her up, they might not have trusted her. She wasn't used to feeling un-trusted, nor was she used to being without Tai's support.

"Kari?" a voice said.

"Tai!" Kari said, seeing her brother in the door.

"Where's Demidevimon?" he asked.

* * *

><p>The sewer was dark, dank, and it smelled awful. Still, it wasn't as wet as it could have been, and for that, he was thankful. He was walking steadily forward. He couldn't remember when he had begun the walk, nor could he remember what he was doing in the sewer. Nor could he remember, for that matter, who he was or what he was supposed to do. All he knew was that he was supposed to walk for a while and then, at a certain point that he'd know when he arrived, he should exit.<p>

Presently, he became conscious of a sound behind him. He could hear his own footsteps echo in the dark drain, but he was now hearing a wet, slapping sound from behind. For some reason, though, this did not disturb him.

"How long have you been following me?" he asked.

"Uh, I dunno," the voice answered.

"Any idea who I am?" he asked.

"No," said his companion.

"Then I guess you don't know who you are, either, do you?"

"Nope."

"That's too bad, pal," he said. "Because if neither one of us has any idea what we're doing, then we are up the creek without a paddle."

"I don't like to row anyway," said the one behind him.

He frowned. Apparently, his companion was not only confused, he was also an idiot.

"If we run into anyone, please, make sure I'm the one doing all the talking, all right?" he said.

"Okey-dokey!" his partner said.

Suddenly, he stopped and his companion ran into him. Whatever he was, he was slimy. Another strike against him.

"What is it?" the slimy one asked.

"We're here," he growled. He reached over and felt a ladder. He tugged at his companion and they ascended it.

They reached the manhole and removed it and came out into the moonlight.

He stood on the street and he looked down at his body. He was gray, furry, and he had claws on his hands and feet.

"I am Gazimon," he said out loud.

"And I..." said his green, slug-like companion.

"Ugh... you're a Numemon," Gazimon remarked in disgust.

"And the both of you," said a voice, "are here to do a little job."

The turned and saw Demidevimon on the sidewalk.

"Hey, you're Demidevimon," said Gazimon. "Last time I checked, you defected from Lord Etemon and took up working for Myotismon."

"Out of the frying pan and into the fire," he said, making a face.

"Ooh, are we going to cook something?" Numemon asked excitedly.

Demidevimon and Gazimon both glared at him, so he shut up.

"If you two aren't sure what you're doing here, let me bring you up to speed: Gazimon, you were sucked into Etemon's Dark Network and stripped down into basic data when it went haywire. Numemon, you abandoned a desert-roaming ship controlled by Kokatreeemon and were squished by a falling rock in a canyon three miles away."

"So, what are we doing here?" Gazimon asked.

"You, Gazimon, are here to do a little technological work. I'll need you to steal a few computer parts and things and create a few programs," Demidevimon said.

Gazimon smiled. "You came to the right guy," he said.

"What about me?" Numemon asked.

"You're his secretary," Demidevimon said.

"Great, I make a mean cup of coffee," he said.

Demidevimon and Gazimon looked at each other, silently agreeing that they weren't drinking **anything **Numemon brewed.

"I've got some directions to give you, but I'll make it quick," Demidevimon said. "I've still got one more edition to make to our team. And he's going to be our trump card." He grinned with an intense, burning rage. "Those Digidestined kids don't stand a chance!"

* * *

><p>"Kari, I want him gone"<p>

Tai's words were hard and final. He had managed to take the news of Demidevimon's night flight without losing his temper, without yelling, and without giving orders. But something about his tone told Kari that his mind was made up, that he would not change his mind, that he would not tolerate Demidevimon's presence any longer, no matter what the consequences.

"Tai, where else can he stay?" Kari asked.

"I don't care. I'm tired of keeping this from Mom and Dad and I don't feel safe with him so close to you or me at night. If he's well enough to fly for hours on his own," Tai said calmly, trying to be logical, "then he's well enough to take care of himself."

Kari put her head down. Then she looked up at her brother. "Okay, Tai. But, let him stay just for one more day. He can leave tomorrow afternoon if you want."

Tai crossed his arms and said nothing. He studied her. His better instinct told him that he shouldn't even let Demidevimon back in the house at all. However, he felt a much greater force pulling him the other way; the necessity of trust between them. It was like Matt and the others said. He had to give her some credit, even if she was making a bad call.

"Okay, Kari," he said, softening, letting his arms drop. "Just one more day."

Kari smiled and hugged him. "Thank you, Tai," she said.

Tai accepted the hug, but his fears were still on him. Just one more day, he told himself. Just **one.**

* * *

><p>Demidevimon flew down through the air conditioning vent into the men's restroom, kicking out the screen that blocked him. He flew over to the door and locked it. A moment later, a man on the other side said, "Hey, let me it!"<p>

"Occupied!" Demidevimon called.

"Come on, there's three stalls, I gotta go!" said the man.

"Hold it in, meat sack!" Demidevimon yelled at him. After some more pounding and a little swearing, the man went away.

Demidevimon grabbed two paper towels and held them with his feet. He then landed and walked on them. He may have been willing to work with scum and even a Numemon, but there was no way he was going to walk barefoot on the men's room floor.

He checked all three stalls, but the agent he was looking for still hadn't arrived. He was getting nervous and he was just about to abandon the plan and fly back out when something huge crashed through the ceiling and landed headfirst into one of the stalls.

The sound of the crash made Demidevimon jump, but he recovered quickly and realized his contact had arrived.

He walked over to the stall and said to the new, barely conscious occupant, "It's about time you showed up."

"Where am I?" the creature said, his voice confused, but still clear and rich. "My head feels like it's splittin'."

"Trust me, the floor is in worse condition than your head," Demidevimon remarked. It was true. The creature's hard head had indeed cracked the floor.

"How do you feel?"

"Well, 'cept for my head I feel ready to rock and roll!" he said.

"Fine," said Demidevimon, "then get off the bathroom floor and let's get a good look at you."

"Don't be cruel now, you little feather duster, I'll move when I'm ready!" he shouted. Just then, the door to the stall came off its hinges and the creature tumbled out. It stood and Demidevimon grinned happily.

The creature was shiny and looked like he was made out of chrome. He was tall and extremely well muscled. He wore black shades and his joints were all marked with big, metal screws.

"Metal Etemon," said Demidevimon, "how's it feel to be back?"

"Back?" he asked. "Hey, where'd I go?"

"You were turned into rubble by Zudomon and Leomon, according to the story I heard."

"What? Why, this is unforgivable! I'll get those pesky kids even if I have to sit through a Phil Collins concert to do it!" Metal Etemon seethed with rage.

"Glad to hear it," said Demidevimon. "Because that's just what I need you to do."

"Whoa, whoa, I was kiddin' about the Phil Collins thing--"

"No, you idiot, I mean getting those kids!"

Metal Etemon froze, then peered down at the round little bat creature. "Didn't you used to fetch me coffee?" he asked.

Demidevimon scowled. "Ancient history," he said. "The guy who brought you back put me in charge this time!"

"Well, tell 'im thanks for the favor, but Metal Etemon takes orders from no one!" He put his hands on his hips and threw out his chest with pride.

"Fine, go off and do your own thing," said Demidevimon. "I guess you don't want your Dark Network back online anyway."

"Say what?" Metal Etemon asked, his curiosity sparked.

"Oh, forget it. You said you weren't interested." Demidevimon grinned, knowing that this was just the bait to get him to fall in line.

"All right, you digi-cannonball," he said, "what do y'all want?"

"We've got orders to take out the Digidestined children. I'm trying to get us a digivice, a Gazimon and a Numemon are trying to get a Dark Network online so we can wreak some serious havoc on the whole planet, and you, my shiny friend, get the fun job: mess up this city, draw out those kids, and turn 'em into ground beef!"

Metal Etemon grinned. "I just might **like **working with y'all," he said. "But don't think I'm callin' you Boss, got it?"

"Got it," Demidevimon said, flinching (not out of fear but because Metal Etemon spat when he talked).

"Well, what do we do first?" Metal Etemon asked.

"Let me in or I'll break your head in, punk!" called the man outside the door.

"There's a hotel room our boss rented for us using a forged credit card number," Demidevimon said, and he told him the hotel and number. "Meet us there," he said.

"I'm counting to three, punk!" said the now very uncomfortable, very enraged man.

"But first," Demidevimon said, motioning toward the door, "go out there, teach that guy some manners, and cause enough destruction downtown to get on the ten o'clock news."

"One . . ." said the man.

"I think I can handle that," Metal Etemon said, walking towards the door.

"Two . . ." said the man.

"Three!" said Metal Etemon, using a metal punch to smash the door out. "Well, look what we got here: looks like y'all just wet your pants, baby!"

And as screams filled the night club outside, Demidevimon quietly flew back out the air conditioning vent.

* * *

><p>The clerk at the front desk of the hotel was reading a magazine quietly when he heard the bell ring. When he looked over and saw no one standing near the bell, he said, "Darn kids."<p>

"Hey, who are you calling a kid?" came a small, gruff voice.

The clerk looked down and saw, standing there, a two foot tall gray, furry creature with floppy ears... in a business suit.

"What on earth are you?" asked the clerk in a startled voice.

"Oh, so now you're going to make fun of me because of my condition, is that it?" Gazimon said.

"Uh, condition?"

"Miniature bunnymanitis!" Gazimon spat, hoping it sounded convincing to the clerk because he, personally, was about to laugh.

"Oh! No! I'm sorry!" the clerk was sweating, not sure how to deal with this small man's illness.

"I swear, just when I think I can get on with my life," Gazimon ranted, "some uninformed pea brain like **you **acts like I'm some kind of freak! Are you aware that over 10,000 people in this country are stricken with miniature bunnymanitis a year? Do you know how hard it is to steal, er, **buy **a suit this small? You people make me sick!"

"I'm terribly sorry, sir!" said the clerk. "How may I help you?"

"I've rented a room. It's under the name Gus Newman."

The clerk did a short search and produced a room key. "Here you are, sir! It's room 805. Would you like me to send a bellhop?"

"No!" said Gazimon, panicking, not wanting to risk dealing with someone smarter than the clerk. "My faithful guide dog spot is pulling my cart full of luggage."

Numemon followed Gazimon as he laboriously pulled a stolen red wagon filled with computer parts covered with a blanket.

The clerk stared at the slug-like animal.

"Oh, so now I suppose you're going to make fun of my dog's condition too?" Gazimon demanded.

"Your **dog?" **asked the clerk in a tiny voice.

"Grr! Woof! Moo!" said Numemon.

* * *

><p>Yuta was just about to lean over and kiss his date in his car, when he heard a rap on his window.<p>

He frowned and said, "Just one minute," to his annoyed date. He rolled down the window and was greeted by a goon in a metal monkey suit.

"What do you think you're doing?" Yuta demanded. They were in a traffic jam downtown and he didn't need some freak interrupting valuable make-out time.

"Hey, chill out, baby!" Metal Etemon said. "How would you like to have your very own convertible?"

"Really?" asked Yuta. "That'd be great!"

"You got it, man!" said Metal Etemon. With that, he backhanded the top right off the car.

"Now," said Metal Etemon to the terrified couple as he cracked his knuckles, "how'd y'all like a compact?"

* * *

><p>Tai slept fitfully. Demidevimon had returned as he'd promised. And he had gone to sleep almost immediately. He wasn't very talkative, but he said he was more than ready to talk to them tomorrow. Kari had taken this as a sign that he was trustworthy. Tai had taken it as a sign that he was hiding something from them and he was buying time to make up a convincing story. Tai had watched him for some time, but he finally lost his concentration and nodded off.<p>

"Tai!" a voice hissed.

"Wha- Kari?" Tai asked groggily.

"No, Tai, it's me," Demidevimon whispered.

Tai sat up in his bed and stared at him. "What do you want?"

"I'm sorry to wake you, but it's an emergency," Demidevimon said.

"What are you talking about?"

"I was watching the news - don't get angry, Tai, I woke up and I just wanted to get back to sleep - and I saw something you have to see."

Demidevimon flew out of the room and Tai followed him, careful not to wake Kari.

"Okay," Tai said, walking into the living room, "now what-"

He froze. The TV was muted, but he could clearly see on the screen a silver monkey gleefully tossing empty cars aside while a crowd of terrified people ran for their lives. Then, a car flew up at the camera and all was static.

"Metal Etemon," Tai whispered.

"I knew he must be one of the bad digimon you'd faced," Demidevimon whispered. "If he's back, it might mean that more evil digimon are on the way. If that's the case, you and the other Digidestined may need to be ready."

Tai instantly sprang into his role as leader. His mind was racing. He would need to gather the others back into one group. The team had to be ready to fight. They would need to get out there and-

"Tai," Demidevimon said, jolting him back to reality. "Do you have the digivice?"

Tai looked at him a moment, then nodded and walked to the bathroom. He removed the lid of the toilet and found his digivice taped to the underside of it.

He brought it out and examined it.

"I'll call the others. You wake Kari," Tai commanded Demidevimon. He nodded and Tai went to the phone. As he began to dial, he found himself thinking about how strange it was. That the one who alerted him to Metal Etemon's presence was Demidevimon. In fact, he was more than a little surprised how helpful he was being. Maybe he really could trust him . . .

"Oh, Tai, one more thing," Demidevimon said, interrupting Tai in mid-dial.

"What's that?" Tai asked glancing up absentmindedly.

"Demidevi-dart!" Demidevimon shouted, unleashing his attack. A poisonous dart with a hypodermic needle planted itself in Tai's shoulder and he dropped the phone in surprise and pain.

"What the . . .?" Tai asked, bewildered.

"Weirdest thing, actually," Demidevimon said grinning. "I guess I don't have amnesia after all!" With that he swooped down and tackled Tai's head into the fridge. Tai was beginning to feel the effects of the dart. He tried to call for help, but his voice was faint and he could barely stand. Demidevimon backed up then raised his talons and went it for the kill.

Tai held up his arms and tried to fend the little demon off, but he was getting cut badly as slash after slash sliced into his flesh. Finally, one of the talons caught him across the side of his neck and he fell to the ground. As he went down, Demidevimon snatched the digivice in one foot. Looking down at his fallen quarry, Demidevimon raised his taloned claw and prepared to swoop down and finish him off.

Suddenly, something hard and wooden caught him under the chin and knocked him back across the room. He stood up and saw that he still had the digivice, which was the important thing. He looked up and saw Kari standing there, tears in her eyes as she held a baseball bat.

"Leave him alone!" she shrieked.

"You got it, kid!" Demidevimon said, taking flight again. "But just for now. In a few days, kid, you're dead!" Demidevimon flew back out the hole in the sliding door that he had first made when he arrived. As he disappeared into the night sky, Kari could hear him laughing and heard him call out one last time: "You hear me? All you kids are dead!"

Kari stood there in shock a moment, catching her breath. She heard a groan from behind the kitchen counter and slowly walked around to it, dreading what she would find.

"Kari?" said her mother as she and her father came out their room, awakened by the noise. "Kari, honey, what is it?" And then she saw what Kari saw and screamed.

Blood. It was pooled on the floor in a bright, red puddle. Kari

couldn't move. She had to help Tai, but... there was so much blood...

****To be continued...****

3. A.D.: After Digimon -- Resurrection, Pa...

****A. D.: After Digimon****

****Resurrection, Part 3****

The rows of fluorescent lights that lined the hallway ceiling were bright after the darkness outside. She ran past doctors and nurses, some in white, some in O.R. scrubs, past the men wheeling medical supplies, past the countless other people in the hospital as her heart beat intensely in her chest.

Sora had run the whole distance from her home. She had been awakened by the sound of the phone ringing half an hour ago. It was two in the morning and her mother had answered it. "Sora, honey, it's for you," her mother said, calling her from her bed wearily. "They said it was urgent," she continued, not sounding urgent herself.

Sora was barely listening. She was tired and couldn't think straight. "Hello?" she answered into the phone.

"Sora . . ." said Kari in a hushed voice. It jolted Sora awake, realizing that her tone was grave and the situation she and Tai had been in was a potentially dangerous one. She dreaded what Kari would say next, but still she asked, "Kari? What's wrong?"

Kari said nothing for a few moments, only breathed in and out heavily, trying to keep control. "Tai's been hurt," she said finally.

Sora eagerly asked for details or at least where she was and, after Kari haltingly provided the specifics, she grabbed her jacket and ran out the door, barely explaining the situation to her mother.

That was the situation a half hour ago and Kari's words still rung like a bell in Sora's head: _"Tai's been hurt."_

She ran without stopping. She felt no pain, no exhaustion; only fear of the worst.

As she turned the corner of the hall, she saw the others gathered farther away. They had all arrived earlier and were waiting for her.

"Sora," said Joe as she ran up to them.

"Where's Tai?" she asked breathlessly.

"He's in the other room," Joe said. "Kari told us that he had a blood transfusion earlier and maybe he'll need a few stitches, but-"

Sora looked at him, tears welling up in her eyes.

"-he should be fine," Joe finished, offering a small smile. Sora

sighed with relief.

"Joe's right," Izzy said. "Kari called most of us before she knew how Tai was doing. If she had known he wasn't... in danger, she would have told you herself."

They all nodded. They too had been awakened by Kari calling them. Nearly all of them had rushed over immediately. Matt and T.K. had gotten their father to drive them across town. They had sat tensely waiting for a word on Tai's condition and had just learned twenty minutes ago that he would survive and that he would be fine. Kari had spent a lot of time with her parents and just recently got back to them with the news.

"Kids," said Mrs. Kamiya as she walked out of Tai's room, "he's awake, and you can go see him if you want, but, remember, he's been hurt and he'll need to recuperate some before he's his old self again."

They all nodded and filed in quietly. Sora marveled at how strong Tai's mother appeared to them. She was managing to keep from crying in front of them, which Sora found comforting. She took a deep breath and walked in.

Tai was lying in bed, his head held up slightly by two thick pillows. The group formed a ring around his bed. He had his eyes partially opened and he seemed to be trying to stay focused on them and not let his eyes wander around the room. Sora stood over him to the left of the head of his bed. After her, the group continued with Joe, Mimi, Kari at the foot of the bed, Izzy, T.K., and Matt on his right.

"Hey guys," Tai said weakly, his voice barely audible. "How do I look?"

Everyone chuckled a little. He looked bad, but not as bad as he could have. He had bandages on both his arms, he was in a hospital robe, he had dark circles under his eyes, and, of course, a huge patch was on his neck where the most threatening of his wounds was inflicted. He had lost a lot of blood and he looked pale. But he was joking, and everyone was thankful, because that meant he would turn out all right.

"You've looked better, pal," Matt said, "but you could still impress the ladies."

"Yeah, Tai," Mimi said, chipping in. "A lot of girls like the poor, injured guy look."

Tai laughed quietly. Everyone was smiling. Then, suddenly, Tai grew serious. "Kari, where's Demidevimon?" he asked.

"He's gone, Tai," Kari said. "I got rid of him. You were right about him, Tai. You were right..." She was crying again.

"It's okay, Kari." Then he said nothing, but his face took on an irritated expression. He turned over to Matt and said, "Matt, could you tell that cat over there that her violin playing is starting to annoy me?"

Matt looked at Tai. He looked in his eyes and noticed that they were

uneven, unfocused, and wandering. He was seeing things.

"There's no cat here, Tai," Matt said, "only us. But listen, while you still can. We know about Metal Etemon and Izzy believes that there could very well be a few more evil digimon out there. What do you think we should do, Tai?"

Tai looked at him again and stared.

"What should we do, Tai?" Matt asked again, speaking more clearly.

"I think that, with the exception of Mimi, you should all get haircuts!" Tai said, laughing again.

Now everyone was looking at each other. Their leader was down and now he was babbling. This was bad.

"Tai, listen," Sora said, adding urgency to her voice. "We need you to think. We need you to help us come up with a plan. Those evil digimon out there could cause a lot of trouble and we don't know what to do about it."

Tai looked at her straight and for a moment, his voice became clearer. "I don't know. You'll have to do this on your own. I trust you guys. Just stop them."

This gave everyone strength. Sora smiled. "Tai," she said, "I was so worried about you. We all were. We were just glad that you-"

"Boop," Tai said, poking her in the nose, giggling idiotically. And then, he closed his eyes, laid his head back, and passed out.

"He's been given morphine," said Joe, noticing something attached to the IV drip. "He won't be able to think straight until he's off it. Meanwhile, we've got to deal with these evil digimon while he's in La La Land."

Everyone was distressed by this. All except Matt.

"Listen you guys," Matt said, "Tai has given us so much as a leader and a friend, we can't ask him to lead us now that he's depending on us. We can do this. Let's meet in the park at 7:30 tomorrow morning. We can talk about a plan then and get everyone ready to take these evil digimon out."

They all nodded and got ready to leave. Kari would stay behind with her family. Matt's words gave her strength, but she couldn't help but feel a bit guilty. She was the one who let Demidevimon stay. And he had been the one to attack Tai. He had almost killed him, and would have killed him if she hadn't stopped him.

She sat down in a chair outside Tai's room while everyone left. She scrunched herself into a ball and tossed about her feelings of guilt. But these feelings were now mixed with a new, growing emotion: rage. Rage at the one whose name she repeated silently to herself: "Demidevimon... Demidevimon..."

* * *

><p>"Demidevimon!" Gazimon yelled.<p>

Demidevimon was perched on the balcony outside of their hotel room. He was watching the stars over the city and grinning. Metal Etemon had done some good smashing up of the city and had been able to climb up the side of the hotel and then sneak into the room without attracting any unwanted attention. Gazimon and Numemon had managed to register without anyone realizing that they were evil digimon. He had stolen the digivice and flown to their room without any problems. The digidestined would be weak without their leader, even if he survived.

"DEMIDEVIMON!" Gazmimon yelled again.

"What? What?" Demidevimon growled.

"That stupid silver monkey ordered a can of Turtle Wax from room service! He said he wanted to polish himself-"

"-so I'll look my best when I do my worst!" Metal Etemon finished with a laugh.

"Look, I told you that it was okay to order those fried bananas, since this is all on a stolen credit card and since the folks in room service have been nice enough to leave everything outside," Demidevimon said, "but don't make any more weird requests or they'll start thinking we're keeping mopeds in here or something. We don't want anyone bugging us, so just stick to snacks from now on!"

"Hey, don't be cruel, baby," said Metal Etemon. "Besides, what're y'all gonna do about it, ya flying chew toy?"

"Well, if the guy who brought us back to life and put me in charge asks, I'll have no problem telling him that you jeopardized this mission and would be better off replaced with a weaker, but more efficient digimon."

"Aw, that'd never happen," said Metal Etemon. Then he stopped and considered. "Would it?"

"Who knows?" Demidevimon said. "But if I were you, I'd shut up, shine my metal butt, and get back to bed until tomorrow."

Metal Etemon growled, but he did just that and everyone relaxed. Demidevimon was pleased with the way he'd handled the situation, but he suddenly remembered the things he still had to get done.

"Gazimon, how's your work with the digivice going?" he asked.

"Bad," said Gazimon. "I can't figure out how to work it. If we're going to use it to digivolve any of us, we'll need to use a transformer to alter the energy it generates. It's built to digivolve Tai's digimon, not one of us. If we activated it for any of us, it might poison us instead."

"So, what do you need?"

"A skematic. I need some data on how they work."

"We'll see what we can do. In the meantime, how's the Dark Network going?"

Gazimon walked over to the intricate computer system he had set up. "Bad also. The stuff we swiped is good, but it'll take months to get anything like the Dark Network moving. If I had some old computer programs leftover from the first Dark Network, I could use it to make viruses that would assimilate huge parts of the internet and make them additions to a new Network. Unfortunately, all the computers that were part of the Dark Network destroyed by, of course, the Digidestined."

"So, you need something with information on the digivices," said Demidevimon, "and you need a computer that's had Dark Network programs on it. Great."

"Yeah," said Numemon. "Computers like the pineapple one that orange-shirt Digidestined kid had."

Demidevimon and Gazimon looked to Numemon. "What?" they both said in unison.

"Remember? The orange shirt guy! I saw it when I was on Kockatreemon's ship and I wondered if I could use it to play Pac Man, but I decided why bother because--"

"Put a sock in it!" Demidevimon yelled.

"He may be an idiot," said Gazimon, "but he just gave me a great idea." He ran to the computer and began typing frantically, a smile appearing on his furry gray lips.

* * *

><p>Izzy returned home tired that night. It was nearly three thirty, but he couldn't quite get himself to sleep. His head was just buzzing with the things that were happening. Evil digimon were threatening the city, Tai had been attacked, and now, after a year and a half, he and the others were about to go to battle once again.<p>

He needed to unwind. He decided to do what he always did when he was stressed: goof around on his computer.

As he sat down, he noticed that he had an audio e-mail from an unknown source. He had no idea what it was about or who it could be from, but it looked like it had come in just the past hour, while he was at the hospital. He opened it with curiosity.

_"Izzy, this is Gennai," _the message began. Izzy's eyes bulged and he leaned forward intensely to hear the message.

"You've probably noticed the evil digimon being resurrected around the city. It is not a natural occurrence. I'm making an emergency trip to Earth. It's risky and I can't stay long, but I must if I'm going to help you. I have some new connections for your computer that will help you fight your enemies more effectively. There isn't much time, so just come to the coordinates I've enclosed with this e-mail. Don't bother to tell the others, just come as quickly as you can."

Izzy was dumbfounded. Gennai, the mentor of the Digidestined had just contacted him. That meant it was serious. What was more disturbing was the complete lack of humor in Gennai's voice. It sounded like him, but Gennai was always ready to make a quick joke, even in the gravest of situations. If he had more time, he would have investigated it further, but he had to hurry, so he folded up his computer, snuck out of the house, and made his way through the night towards Gennai's coordinates.

* * *

><p>The alley was dark and trash cans lined the sides. It was narrow and filthy and out of the way and Izzy wondered why Gennai would have asked him to come here in the first place. Then again, it was far away from any people and he probably wanted to remain inconspicuous.<p>

"Gennai," Izzy called, "it's Izzy. I received your message and I came as soon as was possible. You said it was urgent."

There was no response from the darkness and Izzy started to back up, getting a bad feeling. Something was very wrong here. Something just didn't add up. Still, he called one last time: "Gennai?"

"Sorry, kid, he's not coming," Gazimon said, stepping from the shadows and blocking the way he came. "It's amazing what you can do with a microphone and a computer. A few pitch drops and some static interference was all it took to make Gennai's voice out of mine."

Izzy spun around and faced the gray digimon, whose claws were spread menacingly. Instinctively, he started to run for the exit at the other end of the alley.

"Stop him, Numemon!" Gazimon yelled. Numemon slided out in front of Izzy, blocking him.

Izzy yelled in surprise and fear and looked for some other way out. A fire escape, a manhole, anything . . . but there was nothing.

"Okay, since you're the smart one, Mr. Izumi, I'll lay this out in logical options," Gazimon said. "First, you can try and face me and get shredded up like a confidential document or," he chuckled, "your friend Tai. Second, you can try and get past Numemon and find yourself terminally ill by his poison sludge attack. Or, and I really recommend this one, you can hand over that computer and no one gets hurt. What do you say?"

Izzy looked around and then finally said, slowly, "I choose..." he suddenly grabbed the lid off a nearby garbage can and flung it into Numemon like a Frisbee, knocking him over, "Option Four: Running for it!"

Izzy ran past the disoriented Numemon and was almost at the exit to the alley when Gazimon jumped onto his back with an angry howl and tackled him to the ground. Izzy struggled, but he felt Gazimon's claws as they shredded into the carrying case for the computer. He tried to scramble away, but Gazimon and Numemon were just too much as they finally pulled the computer off of him.

"Now, you little twerp," he heard Gazimon say, "I'm going to slice you like deli meat!"

Izzy rolled over, covering himself with his arms and said, "No! Don't! Stop!"

Then, suddenly, he felt something on his arm. But it wasn't Gazimon or Numemon. It was a man's hand. He was standing over him and looking at him with concern. The two evil digimon were gone.

"Hey there, guy," the man was saying. "I heard you scream. Two other guys took off when I came, but I didn't get a good look at 'em. Are you okay? Did they mug you?"

Izzy stood up. He was okay. But it was then that he realized: "They stole my laptop." And his mind quickly started to process what just happened at what that meant.

* * *

><p>The next day, they were all gathered in the park. All except Tai, of course. Izzy had yet to tell them what had happened and no one had said anything. For the time being, no one knew what they should say.

"Hey," said Mimi, breaking the silence, "I just had a thought! If there are evil digimon out there, then maybe we'll get to see our digimon again, too!"

Everyone was lightened up by that, but Izzy said, "I wish that were true, Mimi, but I think what's happening is a freak occurrence." All looked to him.

"You see," Izzy began, "I haven't told you, but I was attacked by two more evil digimon. A Gazimon and a Numemon. They knew about Tai's condition and they took my computer. I think it's strange that these four are the ones who've shown up. My guess is, this is the work of the leftovers of the evil we destroyed in the Digiworld. They came back from the dead to form a fairly odd team. I believe that this is not something the Digiworld knows of. Therefore, no one would be trying to reunite us with our friends. I'm sorry, but that's the truth."

Everyone looked at each other. Then Kari spoke up. "I think Izzy's right. Why would they send Demidevimon and the others if they could just send another Venom Myotismon, or resurrect the Dark Masters. Don't worry everybody. We'll be reunited someday, but just not now."

Then came Joe. "So, in the meantime, what do we do? Demidevimon took Tai's digivice, Gazimon and Numemon took Izzy's computer, Metal Etemon is messing up the city, and we don't have any digimon. So, again, what do we do?"

"We fight," said Matt, sounding determined. "We'll have to work extra hard, but we can do it. Tai said we could, so we will."

"But how?" asked Sora.

Matt thought a moment, then answered: "Izzy, Joe, T.K., Mimi, and

you, Sora, will try to find Demidevimon, Gazimon, and the Numemon. Kari, you should probably stay with your brother, make sure he's okay. If they find out he's still alive, they might try to finish the job."

Kari nodded. Izzy said, "That's probably a wise decision. I think we should get my computer back as soon as possible."

"Can't do without it?" asked Sora, joking.

"No, it's not that," Izzy said. "It's that... well, what did the Gazimon do for Etemon?"

"Ran his Dark Network," said Joe immediately. Then, his eyes widened as he realized the implication.

"Correct, Joe. My computer still has a things left over from the Dark Network from when I accessed it. A Gazimon could use it to rebuild the Dark Network on Earth. If that happened, especially with Metal Etemon in the area, they could do serious damage with its energy!"

Everyone was quiet. Joe said, "Okay, then let's get to it, where do we start?"

"Hold it, guys!" Sora said interrupting. "Matt, you forgot to mention Metal Etemon or yourself as part of your plan."

"I know," said Matt. "That's because I'm the one going after him."

There was a sudden outburst of protest, especially from T.K., but Matt told them to calm down and let him explain. "Listen: This is ****my**** plan. I'm the one who called everyone here, I'm the one who said we should fight, and I'm the one who said who should do what. If I'm not willing to face the strongest of them by myself, then how can expect you guys to fight the rest? Besides, if something does happen to me," he gulped, "it'll happen only to me. You'll all still be safe."

"No, Matt!" T.K. cried, flinging his arms around his brother.

"Sorry, kiddo, my mind's made up. I'm going downtown tonight to look for him. But don't worry. I can take care of myself."

Everyone looked at Matt with concern, but no one said anything. It was agreed that Matt would leave that evening, while Kari went back to the hospital and the others would work on a plan at Izzy's house.

As the others all left, Matt started to walk home. Then, suddenly, he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned. It was Mimi.

"What is it, Mimi?" he asked.

"I'm going with you," she said.

"No, I can't have--"

"I have to go. I remember what he did to Leomon," she said, her eyes intense. "I want to make sure that Metal Etemon doesn't hurt anybody."

At first, Matt looked in her eyes and thought he saw vindictiveness. A thirst for revenge. But then he looked deeper and realized what it really was: fear. Fear that Metal Etemon would hurt more people. She had to go to make sure what happened to their friend would never happen to another again.

"Okay," said Matt. "Go home and get some rest. We'll leave at 6:30 tonight."

* * *

><p>"Done!" said Gazimon, spinning happily in his swivel chair.<p>

"You made the modifications to the digivice?" asked Demidevimon.

"No," said Gazimon, "but I did make something that can." He held out a small, black device in his palm. "Using the schematics I found on Izzy's computer, I figured out how to make an adapter that I can attach to the digivice. With it, we can transform the positive energy emitted by the digivice into negative energy, and thus, digivolve one of us!"

"All right!" Demidevimon said, flying a loop-de-loop in mid air. "So which one of us should we digivolve?"

Gazimon looked a little confused. "I hadn't really thought about that. Metal Etemon's at the Mega level, so he can't digivolve any further anyway. Numemon's a Champion though you'd hardly know it and, uh--"

They both looked to Numemon, who was sitting on the floor chewing on a doorstep.

"-Right, let's stick to just us. The two of us are Rookies, so we could use it to make one of us a Champion. The question is, which one?"

"Well," asked Demidevimon, "what will we turn into?"

"Beats me," said Gazimon. "Hey, you think you'd digivolve into Devimon?" he asked excitedly.

Demidevimon frowned. "I wouldn't. He and I might look the same, but we aren't. I'm as clueless as you. I have no idea what I'll become."

Demidevimon looked at Gazimon. "Listen, I'm the boss here, so I'll do the digivolving."

Gazimon grumbled, but didn't argue. "Fine. I'll start working on attaching this thing to the digivice and activating it. After that, I can start setting up the Dark Network."

"Fine," said Demidevimon. "Metal Etemon leaves at sundown. That's

three hours away. Let's see if you can do anything between then and now."

* * *

><p>"Do you have to go, Matt?" T.K. asked.<p>

"Yes, I do," he said. "But, don't worry. I mean, after all, we've faced guys way tougher than Metal Etemon. Look at the Dark Masters, or Apoclymon. This will be a piece of cake."

T.K. smiled, comforted by Matt's words. He decided that Matt could take care of himself. And besides, it was true. Matt was one of the Digidestined. No way could an ugly monkey finish him off so easily.

There was a knock at the door and Matt said, "That'll be Mimi. I have to go now. What are you, Izzy, and the others going to do?"

"I'm not sure," T.K. said. "Joe and Izzy did most of the talking. Sora and I decided we'd just go along with whatever they agreed on."

"Okay," Matt said. "Go get 'em, T.K." he said, patting him on the head reassuringly.

"You too, Matt," T.K. said, high-fiving him. And with that, Matt walked out the door to an uncertain fate.

* * *

><p>A fish swam past him, stopped curiously, then swam on.<p>

"Man, I hate fish," said Metal Etemon, bubbling as he spoke. He was walking at the bottom of the river that flowed through the city. He found it the best way to travel. He could go a long time without breathing and there were no people to bother him ahead of time. Even so, the sun had just gone down and it was getting darker at the river's bottom. He decided he should emerge soon.

"Take me to the river," he sang musingly to himself, "drop me in the water." He stopped. He didn't really feel like Talking Heads anyway. He wanted to make some music. All this destruction was taking time away from his work on the concert circuit. He had to get a gig soon or he was going to go crazy. Talent like his should be shared with the world... and death to anyone who didn't appreciate it. With a jump he started to swim to the surface. When he got there, a piece of paper stuck to his face.

"What the . . .?" he said, peeling it off, reading it. It was an ad for some kind of contest. There was something going on at the convention center that night. As he read on, he saw something that caught his eye.

"All right, baby!" said Metal Etemon with glee. "Looks like I'll get to knock a crowd dead before I knock those kids dead! It's show time, baby!"

* * *

><p>Kari had been sitting by Tai's side the whole day. Sometimes he woke up and they talked. Nothing important. Mostly just what everyone else was doing. How she was feeling. She was almost falling asleep herself when she suddenly heard Tai mumble something in his sleep.<p>

"Kari..." he said.

"Tai?" she asked, not sure if he was awake.

"Don't worry... don't worry about... me or the others," he mumbled.
"Kari..."

Kari came close, to listen to him as he spoke quietly.

"It's not your fault, Kari," he said. "Stop blaming yourself... It's not your fault..."

Kari smiled. Even though he wasn't even aware of his surroundings, she knew Tai meant it. It was a relief to hear it. No one had told her that it wasn't her fault. Tai had been right about Demidevimon, but, even after what had happened, he didn't hold Kari responsible. She could barely stop her tears as she breathed out a near silent, "Thank you."

* * *

><p>"Matt, we've got to stop," Mimi said.<p>

"No, Mimi, we have to keep looking," Matt said.

"But Matt, we've been walking around the city for hours. My feet hurt and even you sound short of breath," she reasoned. "Besides, if Metal Etemon were anywhere around here, we'd know it by now, wouldn't we?"

Matt stopped and considered. They had been searching a long time. It was close to ten o'clock and his feet were aching. Mimi wasn't being that unreasonable. The city was crowded and, if Metal Etemon was anywhere around here, they surely would have known about it.

"Okay, we can stop for a little bit, but where?" he asked.

"The convention center is right over there," Mimi said. "I heard there was a music festival over there, with contests and everything. You like the blues, I like to sing; why not?"

Matt nodded. He had to agree. Why not indeed?

"Okay," Matt said, agreeing, "let's go. But just for a little while."

As they walked into the convention center, a crowd had formed around the main stage. An announcer was up on stage and he was aglow with energy.

"Well, wasn't that just great ladies and gentlemen? We've had quite a showing for our Elvis Impersonator competition and our last finalist did a great job, didn't he?"

The crowd applauded and the announcer called the last impersonator out for one last bow. Matt and Mimi moved closer to the stage, curious.

"Okay, our final finalist has been a real crowd favorite, even with his somewhat odd, but incredibly original costume," the announcer said, drawing increasing cheers from the crowd that pushed closer to the stage. "Singing his third song for the Elvis Impersonator competition, here is 'Silver Monkey!'"

Matt and Mimi stared at the new finalist who was taking his stage. The crowd went wild, apparently having been wowed by previous performances that night. Their eyes bulged in horror when they saw him. It was Metal Etemon.

"Well thank you, thank you very much!" Metal Etemon said, his chrome digitoid body shining brightly under the stage lights. "Here's a song that ought to take y'all back a bit!" And with that, he began to sing:

_ "Well, ever since my baby left me, _
_ I've found a new place to dwell, _
_ It's down at the end of Lonely Street, it's _
_ Heartbreak Hotel . . . _

"I can't believe it," said Matt. He meant it two ways. First of all, because he couldn't believe that Metal Etemon would make a public appearance like this. And second of all, he couldn't believe how good he was. He just hoped that he wouldn't notice them...

"Yeah! All right! You rule!" Mimi said, screaming enthusiastically at the top of her lungs. It was loud enough to draw stares from the crowd and, unfortunately, Metal Etemon. He stopped singing while the music went on and he gawked at them.

"Oh, **no," **Matt said.

"Stop the music!" Metal Etemon commanded, which it did. "You! I can't believe you had to show up now! And I was gonna win that trophy!"

"Oops," said Mimi quietly as the crowd stared at her and Matt. "I think I made him angry."

"Man, I was gonna bring the house down, baby!" Metal Etemon fumed. Then, suddenly, he smiled. "Actually, who says I still can't? _Banana Slip_!" With that, he launched his banana slip attack up at the ceiling. The banana exploded violently and the roof began to crash down as the terrified crowd ran screaming for their lives. Among them were Matt and Mimi, and Metal Etemon had his eyes on them all the time.

"Y'all can't escape," he called after them. "Every move you make, every step you take, I'll be watching you!"

* * *

><p>"So, are you done?" Demidevimon asked.<p>

"Yes," Gazimon said. "But I've got some bad news."

"What?" Demidevimon asked, narrowing his eyes, annoyed.

"The digivice has been modified. Normally, it would only work with Agumon, Tai's digimon," Gazimon said, looking at the digivice, which now had the adaptor fitted neatly onto it, "but I've modified it to work on you. I set it to your DNA and your exact digital frequency."

"So what's the problem?" Demidevimon asked.

"It needs an energy source," Gazimon answered. "A human one."

"So what? We'll just grab some poor kid off the street and-"

"It won't work," Gazimon said. "It may work with a different digimon, but, unfortunately, it still needs to be close to the right Digidestined child in order to work."

Demidevimon stared at him. "You mean, that in order for this hunk of junk to work, we need Tai?"

Gazimon nodded.

"Rats!" Demidevimon said, kicking around a few scattered computer parts on the floor. "Rats, rats, rats!" He was practically foaming at the mouth. Then, he stopped, took a few deep breaths, and spoke.

"Okay," he said. "Then we'll just have to get him out of that hospital and someplace where we can use him."

He flew out to the balcony and perched on the rail outside. At first, he was quiet. Then he started to laugh. It was a dry, hollow sound, like the clatter of bones. "I've got it! Gazimon, hack into the hospital's main computer and figure out where that kid is and how we can get him out of there!"

He turned to them with a cruel grin stretched across his face. "And then, we'll see how they like a dose of their own medicine. Let's see how they deal with an ****enemy**** digivolving for a change!"

****To be concluded...****

4. A.D.: After Digimon -- Resurrection, Pa...

****A.D.: After Digimon****

****Resurrection, Part 4****

The four of them stood in a circle, glancing down at the road map Izzy had bought. It laid out the area for the whole city. A small portion of it was circled in red marker and it was this that Izzy had put his finger on.

"Okay, let's review," Izzy said. "If Demidevimon and the others are

going to keep out of sight, they'll need a semi private place to do it, where few people would bother them. That means things like hotel rooms, houses, or abandoned buildings. However, since they will need a place with internet access, that eliminates abandoned buildings. And since it would likely be inconvenient and time-consuming to buy or rent a house, it is only logical to assume that they are staying in a hotel. Doing a little research on my backup computer, I've determined that only eight hotels in the city will allow internet access. All of them are located in this area." He tapped the circled area.

"Well, how are we supposed to know which one they're in?" Joe asked.

"Four creatures that look like a bat, a rabbit, a slug, and silver monkey are bound to attract some attention, Joe" Sora said. "We just have to go around asking if anyone's seen anything... unusual."

"Yeah!" said T.K. excitedly. "And then we'll teach them a lesson!"

Izzy smiled. T.K. was surprisingly charged for this mission. Maybe it was because he was being treated as a definite equal member of the group. Or, then again, maybe it was his way of dealing with Matt going off with Mimi to fight Metal Etemon; he could either be trying not to think about it or prove that he was just as brave. In either case, however, it was good to have him on the team.

"Okay, we'll try to cover as much ground as possible," Izzy said. "When we come to two or more hotels in close proximity, we'll split up to cover them. We need to hurry. It would be to our advantage to find them before Metal Etemon returns for the night."

All of them nodded gravely. As they started walking, T.K. looked up at Sora. "Sora?" he asked.

"Yes?" she said, looking down at him.

"How do you think Matt and Mimi are doing?"

Sora smiled reassuringly. "I'm sure they're fine," she said. She looked ahead, away from T.K., not totally confident of her own answer. "Yep, just fine..."

* * *

><p>"GET DOWN!" yelled Matt to Mimi as they both dodged another exploding banana slip attack which hit a building and caused rubble to rain down upon them.<p>

"Hey, that's a great idea!" yelled Metal Etemon who had been chasing them for about two blocks now. "Everyone get down! Get funky!"

Matt struggled to his feet and helped Mimi get to hers again. They had to keep running. However, neither one of them were exactly perfect athletes. Even Izzy could play a decent game of soccer and could probably run well enough to get away. Matt and Mimi, however, were both the "stay at home, watch TV and style your hair" kind of people. Unfortunately, Metal Etemon was in great condition and he was

gaining on them all the time. They both needed to put some distance between him and them. But how? And even if they did, they still needed to find a way to stop him.

"Does Metal Etemon have any weaknesses?" Matt asked Mimi, who'd actually fought him before.

"Big hammers and big claws!" she said, out of breath. "I mean, he's made of metal! How can we stop something made out of metal?"

Suddenly, it dawned on Matt where he was. They were near the industrial district. He had a very long shot of a plan forming, but it wouldn't work unless he could get far enough ahead of Metal Etemon.

It was then that Matt saw something up ahead in the road. Most of the streets they'd come through had been abandoned. This city had had its fair share of monster attacks, so when someone screamed, "Monsters!" people didn't ask questions. They just dropped everything and ran. Matt didn't think someone would leave this behind, though: It was a car.

"Mimi, hold on!" Matt said, pulling her by the hand towards the car. He checked the ignition and saw that the keys were still in it.

"Get in," he said, not mincing words. Mimi silently got in the passenger side while Matt took the wheel and turned the ignition, revving up the engine.

"Matt, wait!" Mimi cried. "You don't know how to drive!"

Matt looked in his rearview mirror and saw Metal Etemon rapidly crossing the distance between them, a fierce grin on his face.

"Then I'll just have to learn _quickly,"_ Matt said, as he and Mimi both buckled their seat belts. Securely.

* * *

><p>"So, can we get him out?" asked Demidevimon.<p>

"Okay, here's the deal," said Gazimon, turning around in his chair. "I've planted a computer virus in the hospital's main computer. In exactly two hours, the virus will cause the security cameras to fail and an alarm will sound that will distract any orderlies for about twenty minutes. You've got that long to go in there, retrieve Tai from the second floor and get him to a safe spot for the time being."

"What safe spot?" asked Demidevimon.

"This one," Gazimon said, bringing out a map of the city. He pointed to a small square and marked it with a black "X" in ink. "You told us earlier that you were resurrected in an abandoned church. I found that church on this map and determined that it is only two hundred yards from the hospital's main entrance. It'll be dark; no one will be on the street. You should be able to get Tai to the church and secure him easily." He circled the hospital on the map and then drew an arrow from it pointing to the X that marked the church.

"Great!" said Demidevimon. "When do we leave?"

"We _don't," said Gazimon. _"You _get this job."

"What?" Demidevimon demanded.

"I can't be bothered with the digivice or Tai anymore. I'm behind on my work with the Dark Network. Those kids won't take too long to find us. And when they do, I want a Dark Network up so we can hold the town hostage!"

"Well, what about Numemon?" asked Demidevimon.

"I need him," said Gazimon. Numemon practically squealed with joy.

"You're kidding, right?" Demidevimon asked, raising one eyebrow.

"No, I'm not," Gazimon said. "I'll need him to stand guard for the Digidestined if they come around here and also to give me a hand. I'll need to do some work attaching hardware if I'm going to get the Network running right. He's my secretary and it's about time I used him for something."

While Numemon was hopping about, ecstatic about being needed for a change, Demidevimon was fuming. Even so, he couldn't disagree with Gazimon's line of reasoning.

"Fine," said Demidevimon, adding, for good measure, "but you had better have that Network online by tonight, furball!"

Gazimon looked at Numemon with a satisfied look. "Come on, slug," he said. "We've got work to do."

* * *

><p>Kari was outside Tai's hospital room. She'd told her parents the truth and, while they were unnerved to hear about more monsters, they were glad she was coming clean about it now. They told the doctors that she and Tai had been keeping a wild hawk they'd found injured and that it had attacked Tai and they'd seemed to believe that. All in all, she should have felt better that things had worked out as they had.<p>

But she didn't feel better. She felt horrible. She hadn't gotten a lot of sleep lately and, despite her parents wishes, she insisted on staying with Tai all day. Even they had gone home to get some rest. She wondered what it was that kept gnawing at her. This feeling that stuck in her mind like a splinter.

It was anger, she supposed. Anger at Demidevimon's betrayal. Anger that her kindness had nearly cost her brother's life. She had never felt so angry. Normally, scenes of injustice moved her to fight only to alleviate pain, to help the helpless. Even when she had fought alongside the others in the Digiworld, she had fought because she wanted to save the innocent digimon. Now, however, there was something different. She wasn't feeling a need for justice. She was feeling a need for vengeance. To find Demidevimon and make him pay.

To get revenge.

She rubbed her forehead and closed her eyes. She was getting a headache. Kari wasn't sure how to deal with these feelings which were so alien to her. Maybe she just needed to move a little bit.

She got up from her chair and headed down the hall, towards the bathroom. She just needed to stretch her legs and splash a little cold water on her face...

* * *

><p>"YEEHAW!" Matt said as the car jumped the curve and swerved wildly before returning to the road.<p>

"Matt, slow down!" Mimi screamed, clutching her seatbelt in sheer terror as the car screamed down the road at nearly seventy miles per hour.

Just then, a car a few feet behind them exploded in a giant fireball as Metal Etemon's banana slip attack annihilated it.

"Speed up! Speed up!" Mimi said, changing her mind.

"I'm going as fast as I can without crashing! Don't worry, we're gonna make it!" Matt was trying to have a little fun with this. He still had another block to go and there was no guarantee that, even as far back as he was, Metal Etemon wouldn't still get them. If he was going to die tonight, he was going to do it speeding like mad in a fast car down a clear stretch of road. After all, he wasn't going to get a chance like this for years, if ever again!

"Hey, you kids come back here!" Metal Etemon shouted as became increasingly winded. "Come on! Slow ride! Take it easy! Slow down!"

"Matt, where are we going?" Mimi asked.

"See that factory, dead ahead?" Matt asked, pointing to it, trying to maintain control of the car. "We've got to get inside it!" He hoped he could do it. Controlling a car wasn't as easy as it looked. All he did was jerk the wheel slightly one way and the car would jolt sickeningly in the same direction.

"Where's the entrance?" Mimi asked. "All I see is a fence!"

"No time to look for the real entrance!" Matt said, flashing a half-crazed grin at Mimi, hoping it would give her more courage.

"No! Stop the car! Don't even try it!" It didn't work. It hardly mattered. All Mimi could do was scream as the car plowed right through the chain link fence and onto the main area at the factory. Matt brought the car to a screeching halt near a door and urged Mimi out.

"Come on, there's no time to waste!" he yelled, motioning for her to follow him inside the plant.

* * *

><p>"I found nothing at that last one. How about you, Sora?" asked Izzy.<p>

Sora shook her head. "No. No one had seen anything unusual at my hotel, either. Where are T.K. and Joe?"

Just then, T.K. came running over. "You guys! You guys!" he shouted excitedly.

"What?" Izzy asked. "Did you locate any of the digimon?"

"No," T.K. said. "But the guy in the hotel I checked felt bad about not being able to help, so he gave me this bag of pretzels. Nice, huh?"

Izzy sighed, crestfallen. "Yes, that's nice, T.K.," he said. It was nearly midnight and they'd been walking all over the area. True, there were only eight hotels to check, but they had been very spread out and they still had two more to check out after Joe got back from his. They had all just checked out a different hotel individually and Joe was the last one to report back.

"Hey, where's Joe?" asked Sora.

"Good question," Izzy said. "Let's try the hotel he was supposed to check and see if he needs help."

As they came to the hotel, Joe came running out. "Guys!" Joe said. "You've got to get in here, I think I found something!"

Energized by this sudden ray of hope, the group ran back into the hotel. Joe motioned for them to come closer to the front desk, where the clerk was having a discussion with a bellhop.

"So, you're telling me he had a slug for a pet?" the bellhop said.

"No!" said the clerk. "It was a dog that looked like a slug. He said it had some kind of disease."

"Like his disease," the bellboy said, cracking a sarcastic smile. "What did you call it? Rabbititus?"

"No! For the last time, it was 'miniature bunnymanitus!'" the clerk yelled impatiently.

Joe looked to Izzy. "Gazimon?" he mouthed. Izzy nodded and they went over to the clerk, who was trying to persuade the unbelieving bellboy not to leave.

"Excuse me, sir," said Izzy politely. "But I think you're talking about a friend of ours. Is he short with gray hair all over him?"

The clerk was pleased to have someone who believed him. "Yes! As a matter of fact, he did!" he said excitedly.

"Fantastic!" Izzy said. "What room is he in?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, I can't give out that information, kids," the clerk said, taking on an air of official authority.

Everyone looked at each other for a moment, when Joe suddenly spoke up.

"Oh, we're not kids," he said. "We have a disease similar to his. We met in the same hospital ward. We've got antigeriatric paralysis!"

The clerk stared at Joe. "You know," said Joe confidently, "it's when people stop growing and look like kids even though they're adults? Like me; I'm actually 35! People keep asking to see my ID at bars and they still don't always believe me!"

"I'm going to be ten in a few months," T.K. said piping up. The confused clerk looked back to Joe.

"Poor guy," Joe whispered. "His case is so serious that it's starting to effect his mind. He's actually almost sixty!"

The clerk was starting to sweat again. He didn't want to look like an uninformed idiot again, so he said, "Oh, right! Antigeriat- whatever you said! I remember now! Your friend is in room 805."

"Thank you, young man," Joe said. "We'll be off now!" With that, he and the others boarded the elevator.

"Joe?" asked Sora. "How on earth did you-?"

"Don't ask," said Joe. "That lie took a lot out of me. I feel ill."

* * *

><p>Demidevimon's eyes darted to the left. Then to the right. He had to make it down the hall, up a flight of stairs, and to the exact right room in order to find Tai and get him out of there. At exactly 11:55 p.m., he would fly through the hospital doors and begin. He looked down at the digivice, which he held firmly in one claw. He counted the remaining time softly to himself: "Three... two . . . one . . . go!"<p>

He swooped down off the building across the street and down to the sliding doors at the front of the hospital. As was predicted, the orderlies were busy with a false alarm planted by Gazimon. There was no one in the way. Suddenly, a nurse stepped out of a room and stood in his way.

"What on earth . . .?" she gasped, seeing the spherical bat-creature flying rapidly down the hallway.

"Demidevi-dart!" he called. She let out a faint cry and then slumped to the floor, already effected by the quick-acting poison. Demidevimon flew right past her and up the stairs and then turned the corner that led to Tai's room. He'd expected to find someone at the door, or even inside, but there was no one. Kari and her parents must have gone home. "Perfect," he said quietly.

Turning the nob, he entered Tai's room. He was asleep and peaceful in

bed. "Way too perfect," Demidevimon whispered with a smile. He landed on Tai's chest and clipped the modified digivice onto the front of his shirt. It was in close enough proximity to be usable now. It glowed faintly as it came into contact with Tai.

Just then, he awoke. "What?" he said faintly, sitting up. He saw Demidevimon sitting on his chest, grinning.

"Hey, kid," he said. "I'll bet you're trying to figure out if I'm real or just another morphine induced hallucination, aren't ya?"

"Help..." Tai called feebly, his throat dry and his body weak from the drug. When he realized he couldn't be heard, he slowly moved his hand towards the "Help" button near his bed that he could press for an emergency.

"Whoa, just relax, kid," said Demidevimon. "You just need a little more rest." With that, he gave Tai his sleep stare attack, an attack he'd used to incapacitate people during Myotismon's reign of terror. Tai's hand went limp and fell short of the button as he went back to sleep.

"And remember," said Demidevimon, whispering in his ear, "have unpleasant dreams. The worse for you, the better for me." He switched off the heart monitor, the morphine control, and detached the IV from Tai's arm. He then tied Tai up in his blanket and carefully pulled him off the bed and onto the floor. Then, flapping with all his might, he began to drag Tai out the door and down the still abandoned hallway.

"I can't believe I've got to do this on my own!" he grunted. "This kid weighs a ton!" He looked at a clock on the wall as he dragged him past it. Ten more minutes. Plenty of time to get him to the church.

* * *

><p>Kari was in the bathroom drying off her face. Splashing herself with cold water made her feel a little better. Still, she could not shake this sullen feeling of hatred. It was like an iron ball in her stomach, weighing her down and making every step ache. She caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror.<p>

She hardly recognized herself.

She stared at her reflection with curiosity. Those hard eyes weren't hers. That cruel expression wasn't natural to her face. That wasn't the Kari that she knew. Why?

"I know why," she whispered. It was because she didn't know if she could be the same again. If Demidevimon or some other evil digimon were ever in trouble and she had the opportunity to help again... would she? She didn't think so. That compassion and mercy which were second nature to her seemed gone from her heart.

She stared at her reflection in the mirror a moment longer, searching for her old self... but, in the end, she told herself, it was like searching for something that no longer existed. Something dead and buried.

Just then, she heard a beeping. She looked down at her belt and saw that it was her digivice. She looked at its screen. A red dot was blinking on it. That meant one of the team was nearby.

She left the bathroom and went back to Tai's room . . . and she gawked in horror at what she saw. He was gone. Her brother had been taken and his bed was bare.

She looked down at her digivice and saw the red dot on it. It was moving away. It could only be her brother's digivice. Without hesitation, she carefully followed the signal, praying that it wouldn't go out of range.

* * *

><p>It was hot. Mimi and Matt both began to sweat the instant they entered the huge building. All around them were huge metal vats that emitted a dull orange glow from each one.<p>

"Where are we?" Mimi asked.

"The steel mill," Matt answered. "They produce molten steel here, then use it to build girders and other things. I took a field trip here once with school. We didn't get this close, but I think I still remember where everything is."

Matt led her further on into the mill. There was no one else in sight. Most of the work of the steel mill was done by computer anyway. Besides, it was the graveyard shift. There was no one around to stop them . . . and no one to protect them, if Metal Etemon showed up, which he undoubtedly would.

"Here!" Matt said excitedly. He was holding a chain. "You see that pulley that this chain is attached to?" Matt asked, pointing above himself.

Mimi followed the chain up and noticed that it was attached to a pulley nearby a walkway that went right over a vat of the molten steel. "Yes?" Mimi said.

"Listen carefully, and make sure you follow my directions exactly," Matt said, explaining his plan.

* * *

><p>Metal Etemon smashed the door off its hinges and was only sad because it didn't splinter like he hoped it would. Even so, he was grinning.<p>

"Y'all've backed yourselves into a dead end," he shouted. "And the emphasis is on dead, baby!"

Just then, he heard a strange noise. It was low and haunting. It echoed eerily off the walls and off the huge vats. He froze and listened to it, trying to figure out what it was. He strained to listen and he realized that it was some kind of music. Not the rock and roll that he was used to, but something else.

Then, he recognized it. It was a harmonica, playing the blues.

"You arrogant little blues hound!" Metal Etemon called. "You think I'm playing with you? I'll crush you!"

The harmonica didn't falter and he carefully followed it, trying not to get disoriented by the hollow echoes. He could hear it as he got closer. He wove in and out around the vats, trying to find the source. And then suddenly, he saw it.

There was Matt. He was leaning against a particularly large vat, head down, playing his harmonica softly, unconcerned. His left hand was holding onto a chain, relaxed and at ease.

"Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide!" Metal Etemon said triumphantly.

Matt looked at him with mild interest and continued playing, bending the notes easily.

"You've got some kind of death wish kid!" Metal Etemon said, trying to frighten his quarry. "I mean, I'm a Mega digimon, baby! I can turn you into a stain on the wall with one punch!"

Matt didn't even look up this time. Instead, he took the harmonica from his mouth and said, confidently, "Hey, Metal Etemon: here's a piece of advice."

"What's that?" Metal Etemon said impatiently.

"Don't fear the Reaper," he said, smiling, throwing a cheesy rock 'n' roll reference back at him.

Metal Etemon growled. "You should listen to your own advice, kid," he said. An explosive banana appeared in his hand and he wound up his arm, ready to pitch. "Banana-" he said, announcing his attack.

"Now!" Matt shouted. Mimi, above on the walkway, pulled the lever that released a latch on the pulley that rapidly hauled Matt upward as he held onto the chain. He was out of harm's way just as Metal Etemon finished his attack.

"-Slip!" he called, throwing the banana right where Matt was a mere second ago.

The banana exploded violently against the side of the vat, causing it to burst and its contents to come streaming out in a red, molten river. Metal Etemon screamed as he was swept off his feet by a seemingly endless sea of searing, hot molten steel. He went under, then suddenly burst through to the surface. He stood up, his metal body reflecting the orange glow all around him.

"Hey, I can't feel my feet," he remarked. Then, lifting his leg, he noticed that he had no foot there. "Well, here's the problem!" he exclaimed. He looked up at the two who were safely above him. He could feel his body slowly melting from underneath him as he sank further and further into the burning hot steel.

"Aw, man," he said, sinking below the surface. "I'm melting! I'm melting! What a world!" With those final words, he disappeared into a

silvery liquid pool and was flowed out into nothingness.

"That was bizarre," said Matt, climbing off the chain and onto the walkway.

"I can't believe that worked," Mimi said breathlessly. "Hey, when we get down, how are we going to get back home? I'm exhausted!"

Matt grinned at her. "Well, I guess we could drive..."

* * *

><p>Izzy, Sora, T.K., and Joe carefully snuck down the hallway quietly. "We don't want to wake anyone up and attract undue attention," Izzy whispered.<p>

"Especially from the evil digimon," Joe said.

The hallway split off into two directions up ahead. One continued straight, the other turned off to the right. The four of them came to the corner and peered around it. Only ten feet away was Numemon, guarding room 805 diligently.

"Oh!" Sora cried out in sudden surprise. Joe clapped a hand over her mouth and the group pulled back around the corner.

"Sorry," Sora said. "I didn't expect to see him there."

"Neither did I," Izzy said. "They might risk blowing their cover by putting Numemon out in plain view, even if he is just doing a little midnight guard duty. They wouldn't take a risk unless it was worth it. They might be very close to completing the Dark Network. We have to get past Numemon and into that room!"

"How do we do that?" Joe asked.

"Easy," T.K. said. "Distract him!" With that, he turned the corner and walked closer to Numemon.

"T.K., no!" Sora said instinctively, running after him and also entering Numemon's visual range.

"What the-" Numemon said, seeing two Digidestined standing right before him.

"Hey, you slimy, booger-brained, bug-eyed creep!" T.K. said. "You can't catch us!" With that, T.K. blew him a raspberry.

Numemon was dumb, but he knew when he was being insulted. As T.K. and Sora ran off, turning the right corner, Numemon pursued them, leaving the door unguarded and not even seeing Izzy or Joe.

"Come back here!" Numemon called, trying to keep up with them, tossing his sludge attack after them.

"Well, it was immature, but most effective," Izzy said of T.K.'s strategy.

"Maybe we should help them," Joe said.

"They can take care of themselves, Joe. Besides, they're buying us time to get in the room. If we're lucky, whoever's in there is asleep."

As they crept towards the door, they heard a voice (Gazimon's) calling from inside. "Numemon! Get in here! I need a hand!"

Joe and Izzy looked at each other. It looked like this was their only way in . . . pretending they were Numemon.

Cautiously, Izzy turned the doorknob and they entered.

* * *

><p>"Tai! Where are you? If you can hear me, please say something, Tai!" Kari was wandering this neighborhood alone and had been doing so for the last ten minutes. She had lost the signal from the digivice, but she already knew that Demidevimon was responsible. She had seen the nurse with the poison dart imbedded in her flesh and known it was him. The question was, where was he now? He couldn't have gotten too far, people would notice if he stayed in the open too long. She was starting to panic as she felt the trail was getting colder and she was getting more and more lost.<p>

"Help!" she finally cried. "Can anybody help me?" Her voice echoed among the abandoned and run-down buildings. There was no one here. This was a dead, dark place. No one could hear her. No one.

Just then, she saw two red dots on her digivice. They were very near, and they were getting closer rapidly. Very rapidly.

Suddenly, a Honda came peeling around a corner and then was brought to a screeching halt in right in front of her. That was almost as surprising as who she saw at the driver's seat.

"Matt?" Kari asked, incredulous.

"Hi!" Matt said, rather pleased with himself.

"Kari, what are you doing here?" Mimi asked from the passenger seat. "Matt and I defeated Metal Etemon and we were going to drive over to see Tai when we noticed your signal on our digivices. What are you doing here?"

While Kari was happy that Metal Etemon was gone, she was still mainly concerned about her brother. "Demidevimon kidnaped Tai!" she said. "I know he's somewhere in this neighborhood, but I don't know where! Can you help me search?"

After a moment of surprise on both Matt and Mimi's parts, Matt said, "Of course! We can search this whole area in less than twenty minutes with the car. Hop in the backseat and we'll go!"

Kari did and was thanking her lucky stars when Mimi turned around to her and said, "And buckle your seatbelt. And try not to get carsick. Try really, _really _hard."

* * *

><p>"Keep running, T.K.!" Sora said as they both continued running

from Numemon.<p>

"Maybe we should fight," T.K. suggested, running out of breath.

"With what?" Sora asked. "One hit from that sludge of his and we'll be poisoned!" T.K. couldn't argue with that. He and Sora continued running to the end of the hall and then made a turn. The instant they did, they knew it was a mistake.

Before them was a dead end. There was nowhere else to run.

As they turned around, Numemon appeared, blocking their only way out.

"Ha! Now I've got both of you!" Numemon announced triumphantly. However, his moment of triumph was cut short when an growling sound came from his stomach.

T.K. and Sora looked at him. Sora had to stifle a laugh.

Numemon would have blushed if he could have. Instead, he just tried to retain what little dignity he had by saying, "Well, after I get the two of you, I'll just go have a snack!" He raised one slimy arm and prepared to unleash his sludge attack.

Just then, Sora had an idea.

"Wait!" she cried. "Before you attack, would you like a snack first?"

Numemon stared at her, but he paused. "Well, I am hungry..." he said.

"Well, here you go," Sora said, snatching the small bag of pretzels from T.K.'s pocket and tossing it to him.

Numemon stared at it for a second, then opened it and tried one. "Hey, not bad! Don't get me wrong, I'm still going to destroy you after these, but thanks!" Numemon tipped the bag to his mouth and greedily downed the pretzels in a few seconds.

"Tasty!" he said, preparing once again to fire his sludge attack. "A little salty though..." He froze, a look of slow realization entering his dull eyes. "Did I just say _salty?" _he asked quietly. With that, he was deleted, his digital information shattering into dust and then vanishing.

"Whoa!" T.K. said. "What happened, Sora?"

"Numemon are slug digimon," Sora explained. "Salt kills slugs, T.K. I thought all boys knew that." She smiled at him. Then, remembering, she said, "Wait, we've got to help Izzy and Joe! Come on!"

* * *

><p>Izzy and Joe entered the hotel room quietly, shutting the door behind them. The room was dark, save for the glow of a few computer monitors on a desk. The whole room was littered with enough machine parts, computer hardware, wires, and batteries to fill a Radio

Shack.<p>

Joe pointed and Izzy saw that Gazimon had his head down as he worked intently on a circuit board.

"The Dark Network is almost up," Gazimon was saying. "I just need to attach the portable generator to our system and I'll be able to power it. It'll blanket the whole city!"

Joe and Izzy came closer, trying not to alert Gazimon to the fact that neither one of them was Numemon.

"You see the generator over there?" Gazimon asked, pointing to it while still keeping his head down. "I just need you to hand me the jumper cables. And don't touch them together or else you'll electrocute yourself, you dumb slug."

Joe looked to Izzy and whispered as quietly as he could, "Should we attack him?"

Izzy shook his head. "No," he whispered. "One false move and he could easily inflict a major injury on either of us."

"I swear, this is going to be great," Gazimon said, mostly to himself. "Once this Network is up, we can use it to create self-contained earthquakes anywhere in the city. And this computer has all the Digidestined's addresses on it. We can level their homes! Even if they're not at home, we can still make orphans out of 'em! Heck, we can make a two-time orphan out of that Izumi kid!"

Gazimon laughed hollowly. Izzy clenched his fist and gritted his teeth with determination. He had lost his parents before he even knew them. Now, Gazimon was talking about the destruction of the only parents he'd ever known.

Joe only watched as Izzy moved with slow exactness to the generator and picked up the jumper cables attached to it. He approached Gazimon.

"Well, come on, Numemon! Where are those jumper cables?" Gazimon asked.

Izzy walked up behind him and clamped the red cable onto the tip of Gazimon's long, furred tail.

"Yow!" Gazimon said, standing straight up. "What did you do that for, you stupid-?" he stopped, frozen with surprise, seeing Izzy before him holding the black cable.

"Two-time orphan?" Izzy asked grimly. "I believe your math is flawed." Izzy clamped the other end of the cable onto the stunned Gazimon's paw. Gazimon gave a short yelp of surprise and pain as electricity coursed through his body, now that the circuit was completed. For a moment, he only stood there convulsing with the sheer power of it. Then, the charge built up enough to throw him free of the connection, tossing him hard into the wall. He fell to the floor and slumped there as he was deleted.

"Wow, Izzy," said Joe. "I've seen lots of tough guy acts before, but

never one that insulted an opponent's math skills."

Izzy smiled, then went to his lap top. He disconnected it from all the other computers and then began to type.

"Prodigious!" Izzy said. "They've got all the files of the Dark Network in one file that can send viruses out all over the internet. It may be impressive, but it still has to go." Izzy pressed a few buttons and the computer made a few whirs and clicks before finally displaying a message that said, "All Files in 'Dark Network' folder have been deleted."

Izzy closed his laptop and put it into a new carrier on his back he had bought before leaving.

"Ah, nothing like seeing old friends reunited," Joe said to Izzy, kidding him.

Just then, Sora and T.K. ran in. "Izzy! Joe! What happened?" Sora asked.

"The threat of Gazimon has been neutralized," Izzy said as he suddenly noticed a map on the floor.

"Great!" said T.K. "Sora and I took care of Numemon, too. Looks like we won!" Joe, Sora, and T.K. seemed ready to celebrate when Izzy suddenly called them urgently over to the map he was examining.

"Look at this map, guys," Izzy said. "It has an area circled on it. It also has an arrow leading from it to an area marked with an X."

"So?" Joe asked.

"So I think that this circled area is the hospital where Tai is being treated. This X might be where they've tried to take him!"

"Tai!" Sora cried.

"We've gotta get there!" T.K. said.

"Unless I miss my guess, this area is actually only a few minutes away, if we run," Izzy said.

"Well, then, let's run!" Joe said, filling with one of his occasional moods of gusto as he ran out the door. The rest joined him and would be at the church in near to five minutes.

* * *

><p>"Come on, kid!" Demidevimon shouted, his harsh voice echoing throughout the empty church. "Can't you just feel a little threatened? If you don't feel like you need to be protected, I won't digivolve!"<p>

Tai was stretched out on a pew, one of the few left standing in the church. He was muttering slightly in his sleep and he definitely was not sleeping peacefully, but he wasn't having any nightmares or anything frightening enough for the digivice to activate. If

Demidevimon could digivolve, he could concentrate on his offense more and on his defense less. But Tai wasn't scaring easily, and he had the feeling that he was running out of time. He heard a beeping suddenly and looked at the digivice he'd clipped to Tai.

"Oh, _no," _he said, a look of pure disgust on his face. Four red dots appeared on the screen, indicating that four of the Digidestined kids were right outside the church. He had better digivolve quick or he'd never make it.

He looked to Tai and said, "Kid, if you don't help me digivolve pronto, I'm going to have to cut my losses and waste you! What do think about that?"

Tai turned slightly in his sleep, but still said nothing.

* * *

><p>"He's in there," Izzy said.<p>

"Well, let's go!" Sora said emphatically.

"Wait a minute, Sora!" Joe said, halting her. "We need to think about this. What if Metal Etemon is in there with Demidevimon? We don't know what happened to him. And worse, what if whoever's in there sees us, gets desperate and does something to Tai? We've got to think about this for a second."

Sora wasn't happy with this situation, but she knew what Joe was saying was the truth. "If only the others were here," she said, "then maybe--"

As if in response to that, a Honda came screeching to a halt right in front of the church. They all turned around in surprise and then stared wide-eyed when they saw who was at the wheel.

"Hey, guys!" Matt said, flashing a huge, energetic grin. "What's up?"

Mimi and Kari hurriedly got out of the car. "I think that driving that thing is going to his head," Mimi said, looking visibly shaken. Matt, still smirking, but becoming more serious, got out of the car.

"Hey, you guys, Mimi and I took out Metal Etemon, but Kari says Demidevimon took Tai!" Matt said.

"We stopped when we saw all of you standing here," Mimi said.

"We all took care of Gazimon and Numemon," Joe said proudly.

"Do you know where Tai is?" Kari asked.

"Yes," said Sora, pointing to the foreboding abandoned church that stood before them.

"Well, then," Matt said, "let's get him out." Matt walked ahead of the group and half the distance up the walkway to the old church. "Okay, you round little creep!" Matt yelled. "Let Tai go or we'll send you back to whatever pit you crawled up out of!"

* * *

><p>Demidevimon had been listening even before Matt had yelled to him. He couldn't believe it. They had all survived, somehow. His teammates were dead. Again. The Dark Network wouldn't be rebuilt. Everything he'd worked so hard on was crashing down upon him.<p>

"No dead brats. No partners. No Network. No digivolution. No success." He growled and gritted his teeth in fury.

"This is all your fault!" Demidevimon said, turning to Tai. In rage, he sank his talons into Tai's uninjured arm.

Even though the wound was superficial, was hardly bleeding, Tai felt it even in his state of unconsciousness. He cried out in sudden pain and fear.

And then... the digivice activated. It clicked to life and began to shake as power moved through it.

Demidevimon stared at it for a moment in shock. Then, as he began to feel the energy enter his body, he laughed and flew outside.

* * *

><p>After receiving no answer from inside, Matt and the others were about to attack when Demidevimon flew out the front window and onto the steeple at the top of the church.<p>

"We'll see who sends who where, kid!" Demidevimon said. With that, he began to glow. His whole body was engulfed in a white light.

"Inconceivable!" Izzy exclaimed. "He must have learned how to digivolve using Tai's digivice!"

"Correct, smart guy!" Demidevimon said as he began to reshape into his new form. "Demidevimon digivolve to..."

There was a bright flash and he stood before them. His new form towered above them as he announced himself to the world: "...Fallen Angemon!"

Everyone, even Fallen Angemon, was amazed at his new appearance. "Hey, T.K.," said Fallen Angemon, "does this look familiar to you, because I'm getting Deja Vu all over again!"

T.K. was staring, open-mouthed in horror. He looked like Angemon, his digimon, but... he was different. He had wings, a coat of armor, a helmet, and a staff, but all of it seemed twisted somehow. Instead of white dove wings, his six wings were black, like a crow's. Instead of a white coat of armor, his was a dirty soot gray. Instead of the silvery helmet of Angemon's, Fallen Angemon's was black, iron, and still bore the skull that was characteristic of Demidevimon's hood. His staff, likewise, was not made of gold, but of black, rusty iron as well.

"This is too great!" Fallen Angemon laughed. "I mean, I not only get six wings, I get arms? I've never even had arms before! This is

better than I could have imagined!"

Suddenly, his interest returned to the children. "Oh, you're still here," he said. "Well, no point bragging about these powers if I'm not going to use them. Let's try this..." Fallen Angemon pulled back his hand and it glowed a dull red as energy gathered in his fist. "Hand of Heresy!" he shrieked, sending a beam of pure energy into the ground, causing it to explode and everyone nearby it to be thrown into the air.

Izzy, Mimi, and Joe instinctively tried to run across the street for cover, but Fallen Angemon saw them and in seconds flew across the street and landed before them. "Where are you going?" he asked. "We're just starting to have fun! I know _I'm _enjoying this!" He began to flap his wings and created enough wind to blast the three of them back across the street and into the church yard.

Matt tried to run to the back of the church, to see if there was some way he could reach Tai and deactivate the digivice, but Fallen Angemon came crashing down before him as well.

"You've got to be quicker, tough guy!" he said to Matt, enjoying himself immensely. He slammed his staff into the ground a few inches from Matt's foot and then brought it up into his stomach, scooping him off the ground. Matt clung to the staff as he was held helpless in the air.

"Matt!" T.K. yelled.

"Don't worry, kid," Fallen Angemon said in mock reassurance. "I wouldn't separate you two. I want to destroy you both at the same time!" He laughed cruelly and then flung Matt off the end of the staff and into the ground. He hit it hard and had the wind knocked out of him. The others gathered around him to help him up.

"Hey, one convenient little cluster," said Fallen Angemon. "Well, fun is fun, but I don't need to push my luck. It's time to finish you off for good!"

Kari and the others were trapped. No matter which way they ran, he could catch them and finish them easily. She was terrified, but she still had one more idea left.

"Tai!" she called. "We need your help! We're in trouble, Tai! If you don't do something, we're doomed!"

* * *

><p>Tai was in darkness, somewhere between sleep and consciousness. He was still vaguely under the influence of Demidevimon's sleep stare, but it was wearing off, as was the morphine. He was frightened by weird visions in his head. Strange fragments of nightmares that he tried to escape but couldn't.<p>

And then he heard her voice; Kari's voice. _"Tai! We need your help!..."_

"What was that?" Tai thought. "Who needs my help?"

_ "We're in trouble, Tai! If you don't do something we're

doomed!"_

"Kari," he thought. "Kari and my friends need my help." And in his mind, he understood. In the darkness of his unconsciousness, he turned and faced those nightmare fragments. He charged at them and tossed them aside. He had to help. He only needed one thing: Courage.

Tai's chest began to glow. The symbol of Courage appeared there, where his crest used to be. But he needed no crest, now. Courage was in him. It was a part of him.

The digivice glowed orange and reacted again.

* * *

><p>Outside, Fallen Angemon raised his hand, preparing to unleash his devastating Hand of Heresy attack on his helpless victims, when he began to glow again.<p>

"What the...?" he asked. "I'm digivolving again? Incredible!" He raised his arms in triumph... but then suddenly clenched his sides in pain as the glow left him. "What... what's happening?" he asked, confused.

Izzy, curious, opened his computer and looked up Fallen Angemon on his Digimon Analyzer. "Here's what's happening," he said to the astounded others. "Fallen Angemon is the result of an unnatural digivolution caused by the modification of Tai's digivice. However, it was only built to handle a small amount of energy at a time. When Kari called to Tai, his Courage flooded the digivice with more positive energy than it was prepared to handle. As a result, Fallen Angemon is being given only mild amounts of negative energy mixed with a poisonous amount of positive energy!"

They all looked to Fallen Angemon, who was doubled over in pain. Suddenly, odd changes began to take place in his body as it tried to digivolve. One of his black wings turned to metal and stretched out wildly. Another lost its feathers and became a spike of bone. One of his arms began to swell with so much muscle that it became bloated and immovable. His spine stretched upward, but since his body couldn't accommodate it, he was forced over into a hunch.

"Help me!" he cried feebly, his body turning against itself.

"What we are witnessing," Izzy said, both fascinated and disgusted, "is a failed digivolution."

Fallen Angemon gave one last cry of pain and then began to glow again. This time, however, he devolved back into Demidevimon. The small bat-like creature staggered for a moment, then fell back.

Kari rushed over to him. He was in bad shape. His wings were tattered and his hood was frayed. One of his eyes was swollen shut. He had bruises on his jaw and one of his fangs was cracked. Kari, without thinking, stooped to pick him up.

"What are you doing?" he snapped, giving himself a coughing fit. "After all that, you'd still try to help me?"

Kari looked at him for a moment, then, with slow realization, said, "Yes. I would." She smiled to herself, realizing that she still had compassion. That, in fact, it had never really left her at all.

Demidevimon growled at her. He'd wanted her to never trust again, never show the kind of kindness she was known for. But, even at that, he'd failed.

"Get lost, kid," he said, turning from her.

Kari was about to protest when she looked up and saw Tai standing in the church doorway. "Tai!" she cried, as she and the others ran over to him, leaving Demidevimon behind, forgotten.

Demidevimon could barely hear their voices, chattering excitedly. He was cold, and in pain, but he felt the rage ebbing away. He stared up at the stars as they twinkled dimly in the night sky. He felt a strange kind of peace. Not with the world, not with anyone else in particular, but more like a peace with his fate. The fact that he was returning to the place he came from. The place he belonged. Where that was, he didn't know. He just knew that it was time to rest once again.

"This is... how it... should... be," he whispered. He stared at the stars, past the buildings and the city lights, and saw the blackness deepen and intensify.

And then, there was nothing.

* * *

><p>"Tai," Kari said, "you did it. You were the one that saved us."<p>

"That's great," Tai said without energy. He looked behind him and said, "Hey, Izzy, could you go get my blanket and wrap it around me? This hospital robe is a little drafty." Smiling, Izzy went inside and retrieved the blanket.

"So, you beat the other evil digimon without me?" he asked Matt.

"Sure did," Matt said.

"Darn. I missed out on all the fun," he joked, wearily. The others had to smile. Slowly, they began to lead him back towards the hospital, supporting him as they walked.

"Hey, Sora, weren't you there yesterday saying something about being so worried about me?" he asked her, grinning.

Sora looked at him for a moment and paused. She considered for a minute, then asked, "That depends. Didn't you poke my nose and say 'Boop,' before I could finish?"

Tai smiled at her and she smiled back. The whole group carefully made their way into the night together, heading back to a place of light against the darkness outside. It would be a good place to stay for the time being.

****The End****

_(Well, I hope you've enjoyed this story, folks. Whether you did or didn't I'd appreciate your comments, so please review. To those of you who made suggestions and didn't get them in here, I apologize and hope you'll watch for my next thing. Peace and love:
_Thinker.)

5. Author's Notes and Commentary

****"Resurrection"****

****Author's Notes & Commentary****

When I wrote "Resurrection" way back in 2000, it was my very first try at writing fanfiction. I had actually been working on a novel which I later completed, but I found that writing other things was a good way to break up the grind of such a long work and also a chance to practice different techniques. I had the idea for the story for a while before putting it down on paper (or, to date it better, Corel WordPerfect), but it took a while to overcome the idea that it was a really dorky thing to do and just say to myself, "Look, it's the Internet, nobody's going to know about it, and you don't really want to live the rest of your life worrying what people will think is cool anyway." So, I finally took a crack at it.

Now, over a decade later, I'm back to review my old work, fix a few things, and give my thoughts on that attempt.

****Why a Digimon Fanfic?**

> I've always loved animation, but it wasn't until around 1999/2000 that I actually started watching anime. The two series that got me interested in it were "Cowboy Bebop" on Cartoon Network's Adult Swim and "Digimon" on Fox. "Bebop" is an amazing series, truly like nothing else out there, but I felt it had said everything it needed to. There wasn't much else I felt could be contributed to it, nothing that raised my curiosity, and to be honest, I didn't think my own writing was quite good enough to add something worthy to it. "Digimon" was a kids' show, so I felt I could take it a little less seriously.

As to why I liked the show in the first place, it was one of the first shows I saw that made a real emotional impact with its viewers and did it with kids who were, for a lack of a better word, "realistic." Yes, they're cartoony kids with oddball fashion sense and colorful monsters who fight bigger, meaner colorful monsters. But they weren't superheroes, they had real, even identifiable problems, and they acted the way you might expect real kids to act in such situations, be they ludicrous, dire, or heartrending. So, there I was, a guy too old to be watching a kids' cartoon, watching and being absolutely enthralled with it. At the end, I found myself wanting more and, in my wanderings about the net, discovered the world of fanfiction.

I read some of them, and while a lot of them were absolute crap, there were a lot of genuinely good stories out there written by people who, like me, came to love these eight crazy kids and their little companions.

****The Story****

When I first started watching "Digimon," it wasn't from the start. When I first saw the show advertized, I said to myself the same thing pretty much everyone said: "Oh, good, a 'Pokemon' rip off. Pass!" Of course, like everyone who has seen both shows can tell you, I eventually found out the two were nothing alike. While it does follow a formula, Digimon was far more dynamic in its plot and characters, and while I originally started watching it since I was bored and had nothing else to do when it was on, I became an addict and started sneaking in episodes when I was sure nobody would walk in on me watching it.

So, yeah, proof that I was a natural born geek: some people dread being caught watching porn; I dreaded being caught watching Digimon. But anyway...

I first started watching at the tail end of the Etemon story arc, and picked up on the show when DemiDevimon was introduced. The little bowling ball with wings was a weakling, an unreliable little punk who couldn't win a fight against even the weakest unevolved digimon partner. Literally; Patamon kicked his butt!

But the story revealed that he had basically done what no other villain had done: he had broken up the team and driven them apart with lies, deceit, and mind games. At the time, I was studying Shakespeare's "Othello," a story which is driven by the machinations of a despicable, manipulative bastard named Iago. DemiDevimon was interesting as a villain because he was clever, not because he was strong. However, as his plans unraveled one-by-one, he fell by the wayside to become another incompetent lacky for the main villain, Myotismon. And, in the end, in a bit of a nightmare-fuel-inducing moment, he got eaten. I felt he deserved another shot.

What needed to happen in this story was a battle of wits, though. Towards that end, I made a decision to make the villains more threatening in their actions than their abilities. Furthermore, I thought about how to best include the digimon partners when I hit on a useful observation about the series: the show actually works okay without them.

Don't get me wrong, they're lovable, and without them fighting and their often touching relationships with their partners, the whole show falls apart. But think about the show itself, be it the first season or any season, and ask yourself, who is your favorite character?

The smart money says you picked a human character. Am I right?
:)

Despite the fact that they don't really DO much, the emotional turmoil and maturation of the characters is what drives the plot, and the digimon themselves, to greater heights. To make the story more interesting, I decided to give the kids a chance to shine solely on their own _without_ their partners. Adding to that, I realized that the kids are also bound together by Tai, their leader. By taking him out of the action early, I gave the other seven kids a shot at demonstrating their own abilities.

****The Update and My Reaction****

I'm going through all my old stories and updating them and fixing the formatting that screwed up in its updates over the years. If you've read this story before and you read it again now, you won't find it all that different. The only major changes I've made to the story were:

I changed it so "virus digimon" was not equal to "evil digimon."

I fixed some dialogue to make it more believable and less blunt.

Still, my goal here is to tweak the stories to make them a little better, but I don't want to totally mess around with the original works, so a lot of the cheesy jokes (every bit as cheesy as Jeff Nimoy could write!), classic rock references, lame romantic moments, and overly dramatic moments ("There was so much blood" comes to mind), got left in. Part of the fun of fanfics is that they are at least a little bit amateurish and cheesy, so I have left it that way.

"Resurrection," as I said, was my very first fanfic, and it shows. The buildup is slow, the chapters are uneven in their length, getting longer each time (which happened in part because I became more confident about writing more), and there are some out-of-character moments here and there. Mimi's a little too airheaded, Izzy's a little too vindictive, and Kari's a bit more angsty than I think she would really be.

On the romantic bits, I'd like to point out, as I said in my commentary for my Tai/Sora romance story "Behind Your Eyes," this story was written before Matt/Sora became canonical, and in the first season even the movie seemed to be indicating that Tai and Sora had a thing. But I hate really sappy moments and so even way back then, I tried to keep the sap to tolerable levels. "Cute" is good, but "saccharine" is vomit-inducing.

A few reviewers noticed that I paired Matt with Mimi and praised the subtle romance between them. While I was aware of some people shipping the two of them, I really wasn't going for that, to be honest. I thought it would be fun to put them together, and, to be bluntly honest, I needed to put Mimi somewhere and it seemed like the best place for her was helping Matt out. Sorry, Mimi fans. (If it makes you feel better, she gets very major roles in two of my other works: "Unintended" and "Ancient Enemy," which will both get the update treatment.)

The worst thing I did, though, was leave a major plot point unresolved: who the heck was resurrecting evil digimon anyway? Reader and fellow fanfic writer Ryan Berke noticed and, since he enjoyed the fanfic so much, he asked if he could write a sequel. While I was initially skeptical, I was curious to see what someone else would do with it, so I said yes. If you go to his page, you'll find it. Unfortunately, he never resolved it either, although his take on the idea was somewhat interesting anyway. So, I retook control of the series and finished off the trilogy with "Resurrection: Wake the Dead," another story I wrote during Season 2.

Let me just say that I'm not happy with either of those sequels, and

while I eventually did resolve the plot, I still like this original story better than the sequels and can forgive the open ending.

****Legacy****

In the time since I wrote this story, I have learned Japanese, lived in Japan for several years, and settled into a career back in the United States as a teacher of English as a second language. I often wonder how things might have changed if I hadn't gotten interested in Japan, first through anime, then through meeting international students, and followed that chain of events to where I am now. This fanfic was one step along the way toward acknowledging my geekier habits and my need to be more creative, and I think I am happier for making that step.

It's my sincere hope that you enjoyed this silly little story despite its flaws and likewise pursue your own interests wherever they may take you.

_ -Thinker, December 2011_

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><p>P.S. If you must, here are the sequels to this story.

_#2: [.net/s/195539/1/A_D_After_Digimon_Resurrection_2_](#)

_#3: [.net/s/237790/1/Resurrection_Wake_the_Dead](#)
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><p>If you're interested, I'm slowly updating and reformatting my older works before returning to my only unfinished story "Ancient Enemy: A Digimon Fan-Novel." I'm keeping a list of things as they update, but feel free to put me on author alert or a favorite list if you'd like to stay updated.<p>

As always, please read and review. I take all comments, good or bad, and I will try to respond if you ask for a response.

Thank you!

End
file.